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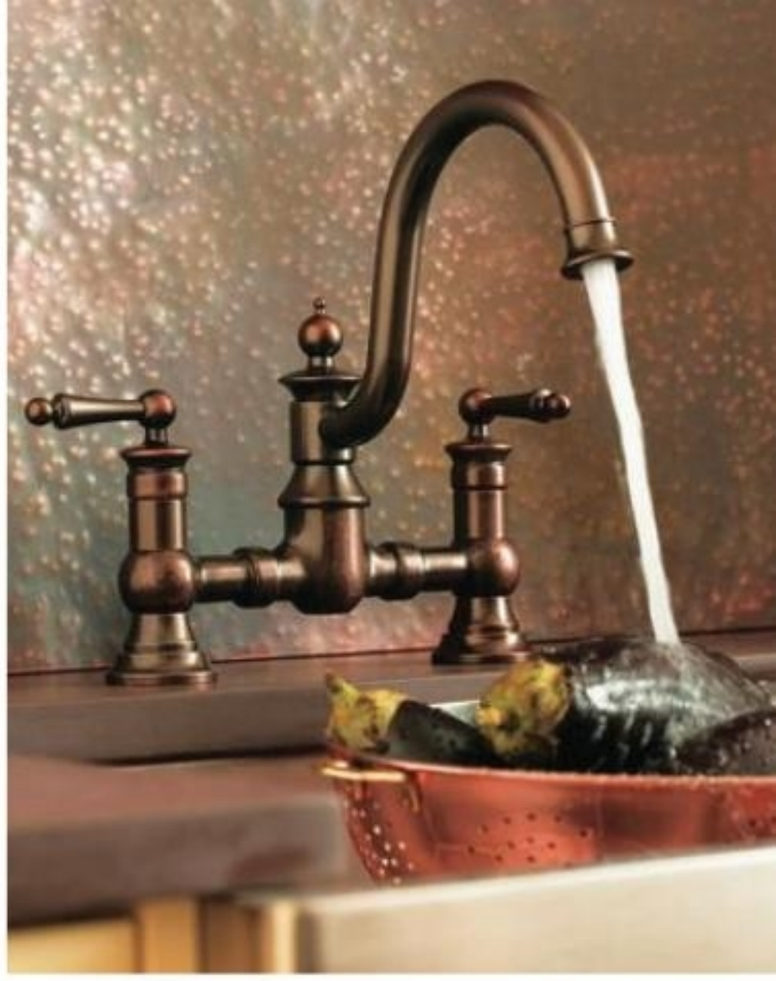

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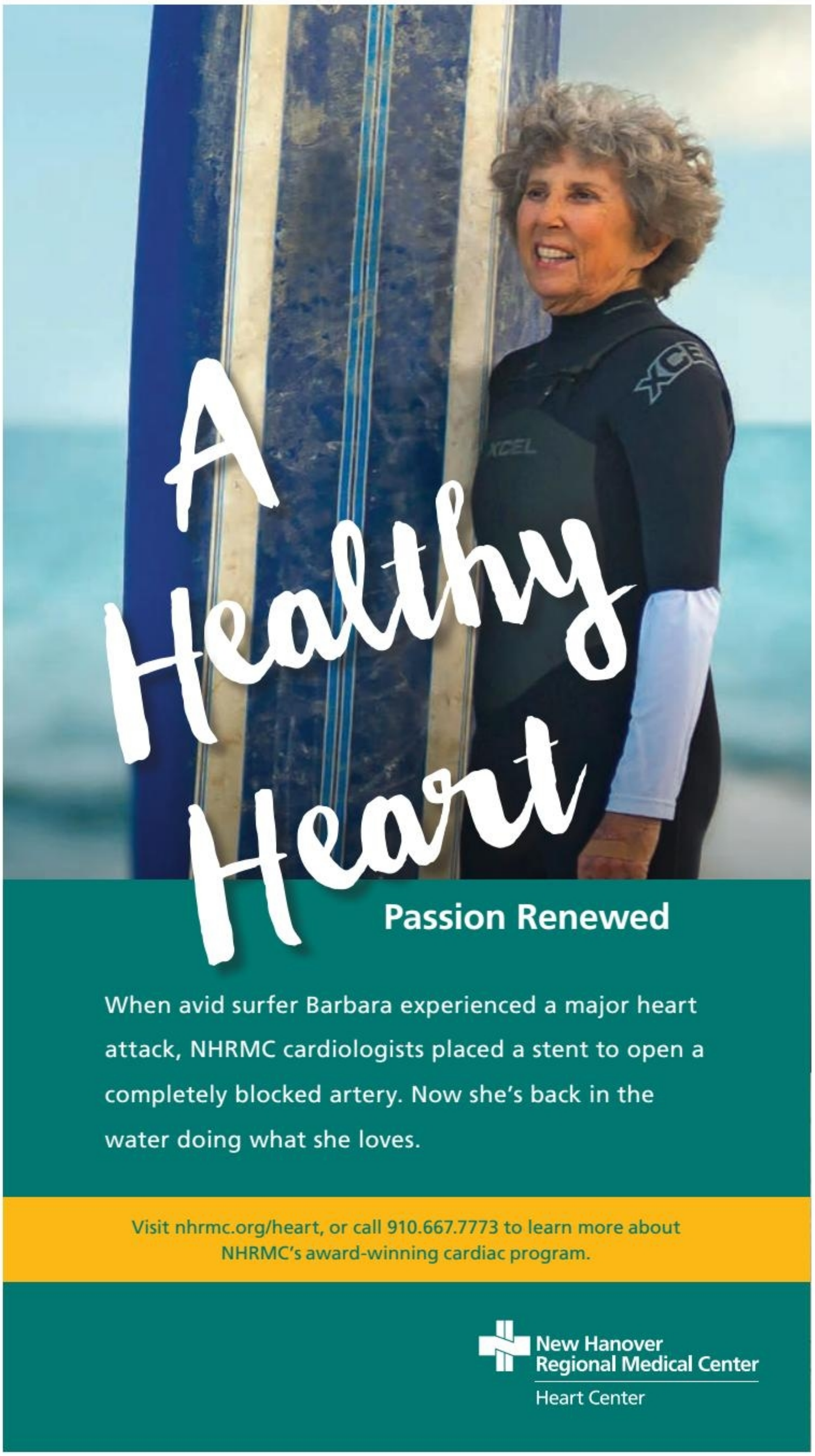
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Salt
MAGAZINE

VOLUME 5, NO. 3

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Salt *Magazine is published by* The Pilot LLC

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121 S. 5th St- $569,900– Historic District

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- Off street parking

2204 Mason's Point Pl.- $849,000 - Landfall

- 4 Beds/3 Baths
- 4412 sq. ft.
- Views of golf & marsh
- Screened in porch

100 Edgewater Ln- $1,140,000– Off Airlie Rd

- 5 Beds/5 Full 2 Half Ba
- 6725 Sq Ft
- 32' boatslip
- Large theater room

1831 Cricket Court- $ 699,000– Landfall

- 4 Beds/3.5 Baths
- 4084 Sq Ft
- Screened back porch
- Overlooks 14th Green

2549 Crab Catcher Ct - $579,000 - The Tides

- 3 Beds/2 Baths
- 1344 Sq Ft
- 30' Boatslip
- ICWW front views

1022 Ocean Ridge- $975,000– Landfall

- 4 Beds/5 Full 2 Half Ba
- 4839 Sq Ft
- ICW views from porch
- Large theater room

748 Arjean Dr. -$725,000– Santa Maria

- 3 Beds/3Baths
- 2512 Sq Ft
- Boatslip & dock
- Screened in porch

231 Ballast Point- $1,150,000– Sloop Point Plantation

- 5 Beds/4.5 Baths
- 4789 Sq Ft
- Gourmet Kitchen
- Screened in porch

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COVER PHOTOGRAPH BY RICK RICOZZI

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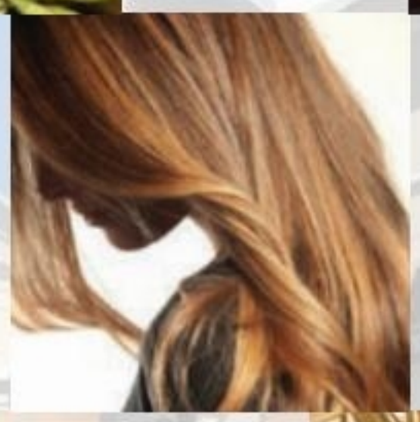

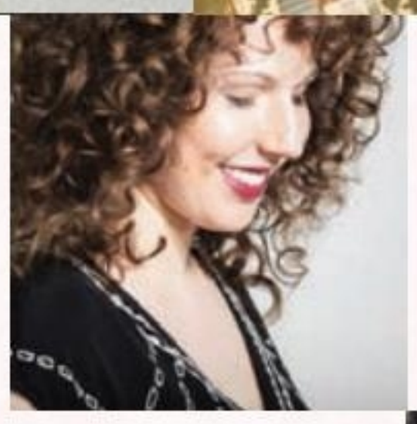

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My Big Spring Makeover

Confessions of a Second hand Joe

By Jim Dodson

On a fine spring afternoon recently, I dropped by the office on the way home from a local garden center — part of a rare day off that I was spending at work in my garden.

The stylish Miz Bobbitt, chief social arbiter and majordomo of our crack magazine staff, took one look at me and smiled, making a wry comment on my "rustic" appearance.

To briefly review: I was wearing my favorite clothes, including my oldest gardening pants and most comfortable canvas shoes, both soiled from years of loyal service in the dirt; also my favorite flannel shirt (the tattered one with all the useful flap pockets), and my beloved — if somewhat faded and grimy — Pennsylvania Horticultural Society ball cap that once accompanied me through the wilds of South Africa with a group of crazy plants nerds in search of exotic species.

"This is how I dress when I work in the garden, my choice attire. I'm giving my garden a complete spring makeover," I foolishly remarked.

"Well," Bobbitt came back with perfect timing, "Maybe it's time for you to have a big spring makeover, too!" She wrinkled her cute button nose. "And what is that smell?"

I pointed out that it was probably just the freshly composted horse manure I'd spent the morning hours working into my new perennial beds. Nothing like the smell of fresh, composted pony poop, I find, to get the blood moving and the spade digging!

Bobbitt, alas, didn't seem overly persuaded by my argument.

"I know gardeners who at least look stylish when they work in their gardens," she pointed out.

"My garden doesn't care how I look," I felt compelled to note. "Frankly, I could garden buck nekkid and my *Ficus carica* wouldn't care a fig leaf."

"Oh, please don't," came a second unseen female voice from deep in the office.

A third voice politely spoke up as well, also female, also quite clever and naturally stylish, also suggesting that the editor's garden attire might do with a "nice tweak if not a complete spring makeover."

A pattern seemed to be emerging. Was my late mom speaking to them from the grave? This was perhaps the only disadvantage of working in an office full of bright, savvy, stylish females.

"What sort of tweak?" I asked guardedly.

"Hard to know where to start," said Bobbitt with a sigh.

"I'd start with the pants," said coworker No. Two, shaking her head. "Those things look pretty frumpy."

"And I think the shoes really have to go," said my third impromptu style advisor. "They look like you found them in someone's recycling bin."

Actually, our man of the garden did find his favorite garden shoes in the recycling bin — or, more accurately, saved them from his own recycling bin, where his wife placed them without prior consent from their owner.

"For your information, these garden shoes are incredibly comfortable," I pointed out. "Comfort is key when one is hard at work in the garden."

"And what's with the old flannel shirt?" posed yet another Voice of Spring Improvement. "It looks like it was made from one of my grandmother's old flannel nighties. She died 20 years ago. That thing has more baggy pockets than an Elks Club billiards table."

The women of our office all enjoyed a good chuckle at this witty barb. But Mr. Frumpy Pants kept his cool, more or less, by reminding his bright and stylish colleagues that some famous philosopher once remarked that pockets are a sign of a noble mind and truly civilized man at work — or at least a dude who can't remember where he left his favorite Phillips-head screwdriver.

"Young men may prefer shirts with polo players stitched on them," I spoke up in behalf of shabbily dressed male gardeners (who smell of manure) everywhere. "But people who toil in the earth prefer shirts with roomy pockets in which to put valuable stuff."

"What kind of stuff?" one of my newly appointed makeover consultants asked warily.

"Lots of things — chewing gum, Gorilla Glue, tape measures, interesting stuff found in the dirt. "

"I'll bet you also enjoy doing your own laundry," put in one of his immaculate inquisitors.

This brought another round of giddy laughs from my wise and well-dressed colleagues.

At which point, I picked up my wounded gardener's pride and fled for the safety of my composted manure pile.

Truthfully, one glance in my direction (with or without a telltale whiff of horse) will tell you that I'm not much for new and stylish clothes — and certainly not a good candidate for a big spring makeover.

Not to place too fine a point on the matter, I prefer old clothes and well-

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worn shoes that could soon be on their way out to the rubbish bin unless I keep an eagle eye out for my wife's eternal discreet efforts to update my clothing tastes without my even noticing the change.

She would firmly deny this characterization, of course.

The love of my life rather artfully pretends that I'm actually a snappy dresser like my father before me. But every time she catches me painting in my only good pair of "church khakis" or digging up a shrub in the yard before an evening out at a formal event — as I did just weeks ago, in a (somewhat old but loyal) soup-and-fish — the impulse to makeover her somewhat 19th-century husband is simply too strong to remain politely disguised for long.

Dad really was a snappy dresser, subscribing to the notion that a well-dressed fellow is a man in charge of his own sweet destiny. As a very successful man of the advertising trade, he believed in the power of a well-fitted suit and highly polished shoes. "Look right and feel right, ready to conquer the day's challenges," he liked to say with an infectious cheerfulness. His generation wasn't called the "Greatest Generation" for no good reason — including the way they dressed.

My older brother Richard clearly caught dad's drift. He might have been the best-dressed dude who ever attended Grimsley High School in Greensboro. To this day, Good Old Dicky Boy looks like "a million bucks" even in his most casual of attire. He never needs a Big Spring Makeover. His life is a perpetual spring makeover.

Not so, alas, his kid brother.

My favorite sports coat is a classic herringbone Harris Tweed jacket I bought for three dollars at the Emanuel Episcopal Church Thrift Shop on Northeast Broad Street in Southern Pines seven years ago. It fits perfectly save for the genuine leather button that always falls off. I gained possession of this keepsake from some anonymous but pleasant fellow who is now only a memory to his loved ones, yet held in highest esteem — and abiding gratitude — by the man who inherited his favorite sports coat.

I have several other sports coats, mind you; many of them have been mended over the years and reflect my own personal "style" of dressing for personal comfort rather than cosmetic effect. Even when I play golf, which next to gardening is my idea of a true return of spring, I wear old, two-button polo shirts (white preferred) and my oldest and most comfortable khaki pants.

Still, I'm not entirely close-minded on the subject of how I look. I suppose every man can do with a spring makeover of some kind, give or take a saucy colleague.

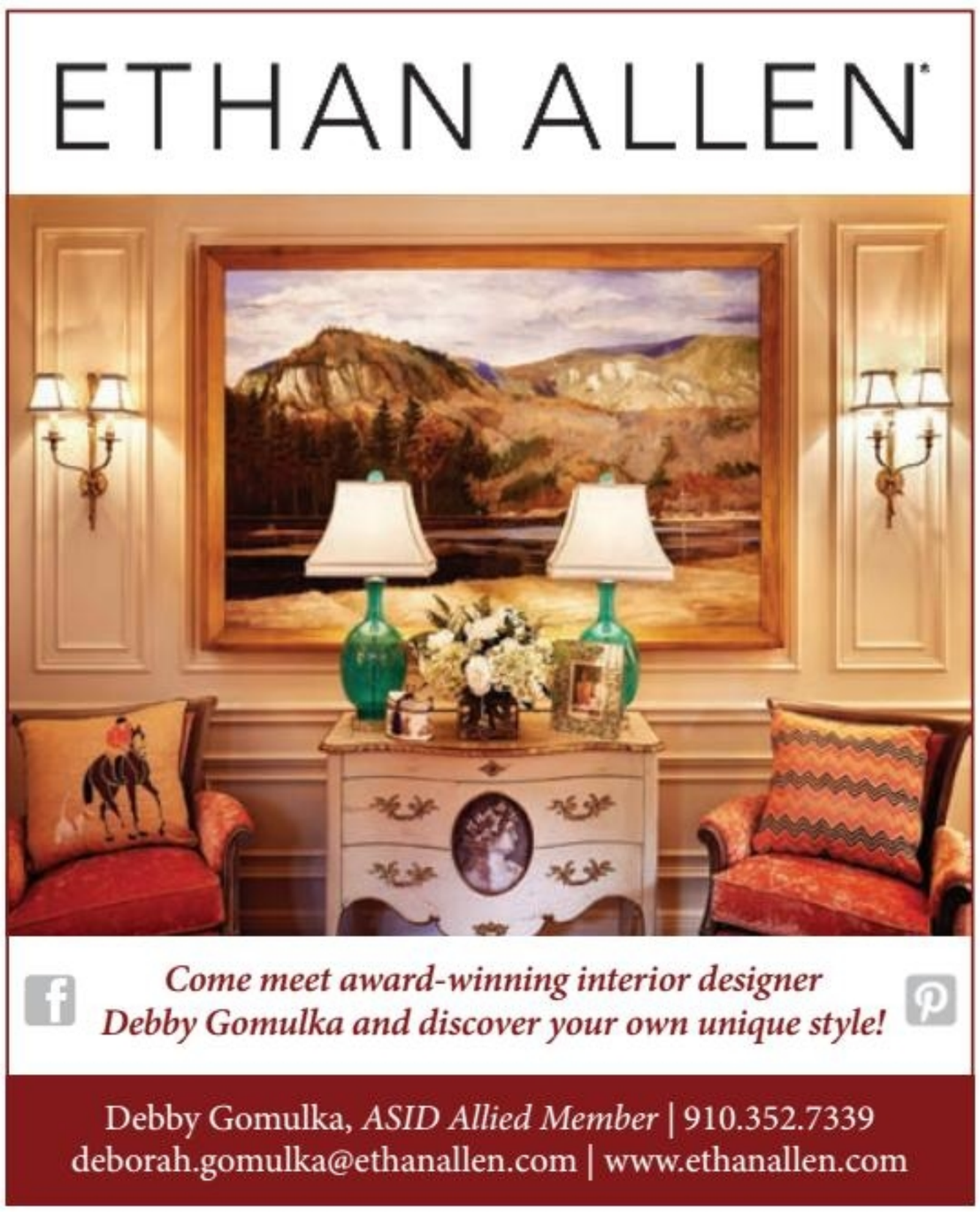
To this end, the weekend after I caused a mild disturbance at the office owing to my rustic clothes and horsey smell, I picked up *The New York Times*'s popular "Men's Fashions of The Times" just to see if anything caught my fancy — or, as it were, what I might have missed since my last spring makeover two or three decades ago.

I saw lots of underfed young men wearing suits that appeared to be three sizes too small for them, dudes proffering moody frowns, vacant stares, saddle buckles, dog chains, violent stripes, zany plaids, jackets that look as if they'd been made from the drapes in a Mafia-owned motel, formal wear with sneakers, undershorts that cost $420, guys who looked like young girls with bad facial hair, and on and on.

In a word, it was terrifying — but also kind of comforting. There was nothing for an old second-hand, tweed-loving fellow like me in the exciting world of men's spring style for 2017, not one blessed thing even remotely suitable for spreading composted manure in one's garden.

Greatly relieved and no April Fool, I went to get an old-fashioned haircut, my idea of a big spring makeover.

Contact Editor Jim Dodson at jim@thepilot.com.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SaltWorks

Truly, Madly, Fuchsia

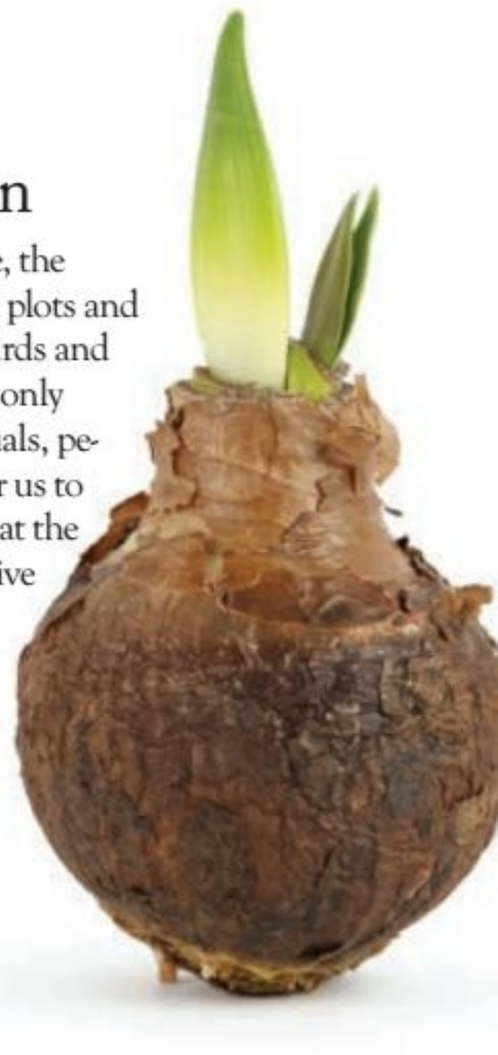
While this time of year our favorite flower paints the town pink, there is much more to behold of "Beautiful Madness" from the Cape Fear Garden Club's annual Azalea Festival Tour. From downtown to Masonboro Sound, the route is dotted with belles in big dresses, plein air painters at play, and more flora than even the greediest bumblebee can dream of. Stroll through 12 plots of heaven at your own pace, soaking in the shade of ancient live oaks and magnolias along America's earliest resort coast, or meditate on each footfall through downtown's formal garden paths. Info: Cape Fear Garden Club's Azalea Garden Tour, April 7 – 9, 10 a.m. – 6 p.m., Tickets: $25 (good for all three days), children under 12 are admitted free with adult ticket holder. Tickets available at www.capefeargardenclub.org or at various local businesses.

Alt-Zalea

This is not a type of night-blooming flower, per se, but a locally grown dandelion called "Alt-Zalea Festival" that springs up in between the sidewalk cracks of the Brooklyn Arts District. If you want something a little more singer-songwritery, a little more Café Wha? than "What!? I can't hear you," you might want to wander over to this northside festival for local revelry. Info: April 8, 12 – 8 p.m. Admission is free. Sixteen local bands or artists will play at Foxes Boxes, 622 N. 4th St., Detour Deli, 510 Red Cross Street and Brooklyn Salon, 709 N. 4th St.

Gardeners of our Domain

How about that habitat? As we lose greenspace, the Master Gardeners propose we take to our own plots and garden with native plants to help protect the birds and wildlife dizzied by the green-to-gray trend. Not only have these Master Gardeners propagated annuals, perennials, shrubs, trees, herbs and vegetables for us to shop, but they've created a native plant garden at the Arboretum to show us how to incorporate native plants. For those with brown thumbs, gardeners will be on hand to answer questions. You can even bring your gardening tools to be sharpened by Bertrand's Mobile Sharpening Service while you shop. Info: April 20–23, Thursday–Saturday, 9 a.m. – 5 p.m., Sunday, 1 – 5p.m. at the NHC Arboretum, 6206 Oleander Drive, Wilmington. A full list of plants available at www.arboretum-plantsale.info/index.html



Eat Local

We can't say it's been a long winter, but we can say it's been too long since we've had fresh produce, plants, herbs and baked goods. Our taste buds crave the fresh snap of a pea and the warm crust of handmade bread. Weekly local markets will satisfy those cravings.

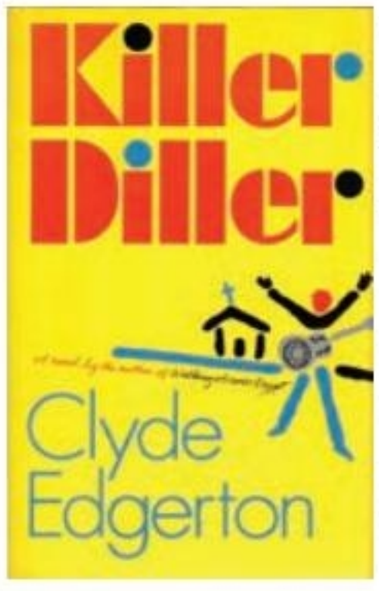
Ogden Farmers Market. Opens April 13. Wednesday, 8 a.m. – 1 p.m. Local farmers, producers and artisans sell fresh fruits, veggies, plants, eggs, cheese, meat, honey, baked goods, wine, bath products and more. Ogden Park, 615 Ogden Park Drive, Wilmington. Info: (910) 538-6223 or www.wilmingtonandbeaches.com/events-calendar/ogden-farmers-market

Poplar Grove Farmers Market. Opens April 19. 8 a.m. – 1 p.m. Wednesday, 3–7 p.m. Thursday. Many vendors offer fresh produce, plants, herbs, baked goods and handmade artisan crafts. Poplar Grove Plantation, 10200 U.S. Highway 17 N., Wilmington. Info: (910) 395-5999 or www.poplargrove.org/farmers-market.

Riverfront Farmers Market. Opens April 16. 8 a.m. – 1 p.m. Saturday. Curbside downtown market features local farmers, producers, artisans, crafters and live music along the Cape Fear River. Riverfront Park, North Water Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 538-6223 or www.wilmingtondowntown.com/events/farmers-market.

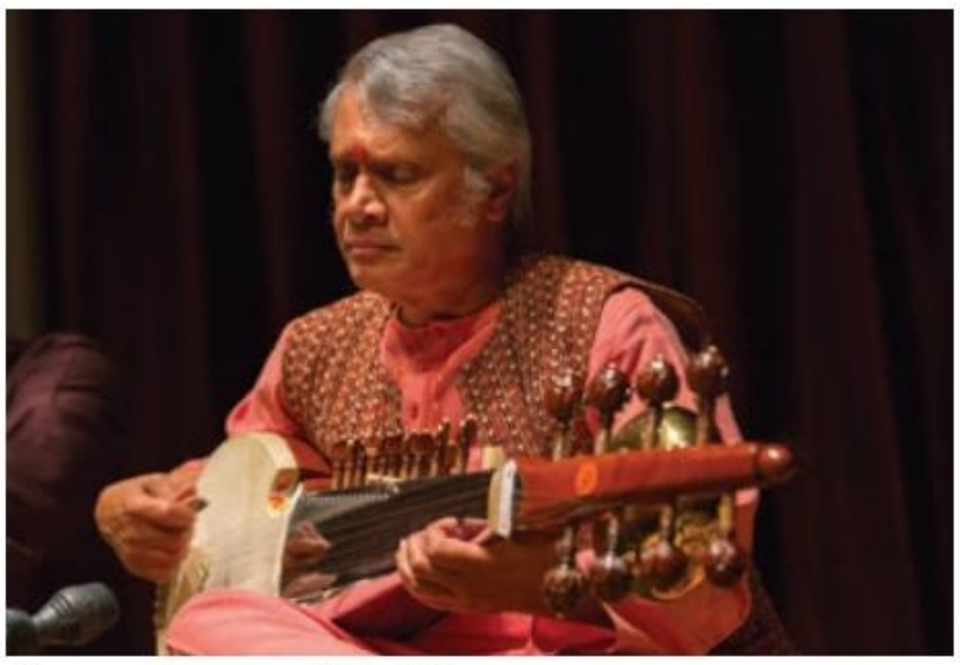
Page to Stage

Though you may recognize Clyde Edgerton from *Salt*'s "Pappadaddy" column, he earned his stripes (and N.C. literary fame) long before us. Some say imitation is the highest form of flattery, but we say adaptation is. TheatreNOW is producing another play from one of Edgerton's best-selling novels, *Killer Diller*. The story follows Wesley, a car thief and gospel-turned-blues musician recuperating in a halfway house who falls for Phoebe, a freckle-faced frequenter of the weight loss program next door. This whimsical, musical sequel to Edgerton's *Walking Across Egypt* comes with a menu to match. After all, it's dinner theater! Info: April 1–29, Friday and Saturday nights at 7 p.m. Tickets: $18–24 (show only) or $42 (dinner and show). TheatreNOW, 19 South 10th St., Wilmington. Call (910) 399-3669 or reserve online at www.theatrewilmington.com.



For the Love of Golf

What do you get when you mix our faithful editor, Jim Dodson, *New York Times* best-selling author (*Final Rounds, A Golfer's Life with Arnold Palmer, A Son of the Game*) with Wells Fargo Championship Executive Chairman Mac Everett? One heck of an evening. Get in the mood for the PGA tour event the whole town is waiting for with two that know it well. Dodson will read from his newest book *The Range Bucket List*; be sure to grab your pre-release copy and get it signed at this event. Talk shop at the meet and greet with two greats of the game. Featuring hors d'oeuvres and craft beer from Wrightsville Beach Brewery. Tickets: $20. Wrightsville Manor, 1952 Allens Lane, Wilmington. Info: 910-833-7158 or www.TeeingOffWithJim.brownpapertickets.com



PHOTOGRAPH BY NEAL GREENTREE

Strawberry Fields

Or perhaps Elysian Fields. Either way, you will go somewhere. The transportive music of Indian artist K.Sridhar, master of the sarod, blends traditions from the north and south of his country. Once the youngest member of Ravi Shankar's orchestral group — at age 12 — K.Sridhar possesses unmatched skill and artistry of one of the world's most difficult instruments. April 8, 7:30 p.m. Admission: $30. Beckwith Recital Hall, UNCW, 5270 Randall Drive, Wilmington. Info: (910) 962-3500 or uncw.edu/music.

This Ole House?

Don't be shy. We Southerners love to downplay accomplishments, but loving an old house back to glory is a challenging (and expensive) proposition. You've got to be one part anthropologist, one part architect, one part handyman and one part crazy-like-a-fox. Why not show off the labors of beauty? Historic Wilmington Foundation's Azalea Festival Home Tour displays the fruits of nine historic homes and one house of worship. The ribbon cutting begins at the David Reid Murchison House, 305 S. Third St., a three-story brick mansion in the Second Empire style built by and named for the cotton merchant and president of the Carolina Central Railroad. Current owners Ron and Sherry Demas painstakingly restored the mansard roof and tower (removed in 1915) to the tune of a HWF preservation award. Info: HWF Azalea Festival Home Tour, April 8 & 9, 1 – 6 p.m. on Saturday or 1– 5 p.m. on Sunday. Tickets: $30 Available at local businesses or online at historicwilmington.org.

Lift With Your Heart

Roll up your sleeves. Grab those gloves. If you only volunteer one day a year, today is a good one to choose. Every year hundreds of volunteers pitch in to make light work with many hands: landscaping, painting, clean-up. Do-able projects are assigned for a four-hour session of "Work on Wilmington." What difference can four hours make? A drab fence around a public housing complex can become a cheerful border. A downtown parking deck can sprout a mural. The overgrown edge of Maides Park can reveal historic gravestones of an African-American cemetery. Just a half-day of work will culminate in a celebration aboard the USS NC Battleship. Reach out to connect to a nonprofit participating in the day. April 29, 8 a.m.–12 p.m. Info: (910) 762-2611 or www.workonwilmington.org.

Things That Go Crunch in the Day

Wilmington is akin to the Bermuda Triangle or *Gilligan's Island* for a number of reasons, and one may be our affinity for carnivorous plants. Yes, pitcher plants, sundews, Venus flytraps and other insectivorous species call this area home in great number. Local horticulturalist Stanley Rehder dedicated his life to their cultivation, and this garden is dedicated to him. Bring the family to this activity-filled day of predators: carnivorous plants, live snakes and birds of prey. April 22, 9 – 1 p.m. Admission: Free. Stanley Rehder Carnivorous Plant Garden, 3800 Canterbury Road, Wilmington. Info: (910) 790-4524 or www.coastallandtrust.org.

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An Ode to Jane Barnell

Wilmington's world famous bearded lady (1871–unknown)

By Isabel Zermani

Once more the circus comes to town,
with big top tent o'er muddied ground.

Trapeze acrobatics do display
renewed talent of a bygone way.
Horses glide, beauties on their backs
for a swift and skillful balancing act.

If we could travel back in time
and we had with us just a dime,
to the smaller tent we'd go
to the Menagerie, Museum or Freak Show.

Lady Olga would meet us there,
to show off thirteen inches of hair.
Her curls grew from her cheeks and chin,
her lips, a downturn'd mustache frames in.

By Ringling she did ascend to fame,
but in truth her name is just plain Jane.
Hirsute child to George Barnell,
her mother decided to give or sell
downy-chinned Jane, then only four,
to a six-wagon circus for her first world tour.
A wire-walker, snake-charmer, and now, bearded Princess,
the oxen-drawn caravan left Wilmington express.

Much to her heartbroken father's chagrin
it'd take o'er a year to find her — with typhoid in Berlin.
Jane's grandmother, a Catabawa Indian,
then raised Jane, on her farm, to be self-sufficient.

At age seventeen, for one blissful year,
Jane worked at the Old City Hospital here.
Shaving and passing and training to nurse,
her course was dislodged by the medically curious.
Though unspecific in reason, she fled from the doctors
claiming that they in fact were the monsters.

Soon she surrendered to fate, her "meal ticket,"
a train circus she join'd and all else did forfeit.

As "Whisk Broom" or "Billy Goat," she occasionally wore it,
or free in the wind like "Old Testament prophets."

On the stage Jane commands, her presence is austere,
her accent, Carolina, her boundaries, quite clear.
On the stage they don't touch, though they gasp and gawk
at the circus or Hubert's or Coney Island boardwalk.
The three classes of freaks, she like'd to divide,
Born, Made, and Two-Timers, at the show on the side.
Born is the highest, it's Carnegie Hall.
"Congress of Strange People" is Palace of the oddball.
When Jane quit in '38, the manager Smythe groaned, bereft,
"She's the only real, old-fashioned bearded lady left."

Her story, not sweet, found comfort near the end,
doting on her fourth husband in New York's West End.
(First, the musician died, then the ascensionist perished,
the third was lost to the bottle after causing much anguish.)

In a theatrical house on 8th Avenue,
lived the clown and the lady, and cat, Edelweiss, too.
Every month she donated to th' A.S.P.C.A,
a cat don't care "if you're bearded," they only care that you stay.

For more on Jane Barnell, read Joseph Mitchell's profile on "Lady Olga" in *The New Yorker*, August 3, 1940.

Isabel Zermani, our senior editor, prefers the storied life.

ILLUSTRATION BY ISABEL ZERMANI

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Life on the Edge of a Small Southern Town

Crook's Corner Bar & Café honors a terrific debut novel

By D.G. Martin

More than a thousand books connected to North Carolina are published each year. There is no way to read them all or even find and give recognition to the best and most important of them.

But we can try. One of the best things we can do is to establish awards and prizes to give shout-outs to the best books in particular areas of fiction, poetry, history, biography and so on.

One of the newest, and one of the best, of these recognition programs is the Crook's Corner Book Prize. Each year it honors the best debut novel set in the American South. The prize, inspired by the prestigious book awards long given by certain cafés in Paris, is a collaboration between Chapel Hill's iconic restaurant Crook's Corner Bar & Café and a sponsoring foundation.

Each year's winner gets $5,000 from the foundation and a free glass of wine at Crook's Corner every night for a year.

This year's winner, Matthew Griffin, grew up in Greensboro and graduated from Wake Forest. He teaches writing, most recently at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette.

Griffin's novel, Hide, is the story of two older men who have lived together for many years at the edge of a small North Carolina town. Frank is a World War II veteran, tough-talking and covered with tattoos. Wendell is a taxidermist who serves the hunting community. These two hardly fit the caricature images of being gay. But they are gay, and they have paid a heavy price for it. For years there was isolation from family, and unrelenting and constant fear that, somehow, someone would blow the whistle to law enforcement about their illegal relationship and activities.

The greatest power of the novel is not, however, in any testimonial argument or inside look at the gay lifestyle. Quite the contrary, the story's power comes from the tortured and tender way in which Wendell and Frank adapt to Frank's rapidly deteriorating physical and mental condition.

When Frank suffers a stroke while tending the tomato plants in his beloved garden, the ambulance rushes him to the hospital, and Wendell follows. But because only family members are allowed to accompany Frank, Wendell tells the attendant that he is Frank's brother. When he is asked to show identification, he fumbles and then tells the attendant he left his wallet at home. He is worried that if she saw his last name was different from Wendell's, his lie about being a brother would cause more trouble.

As Frank's condition declines, there is a growing emptiness in the lives of both men. No children or nieces and nephews or other family members show up to care for them or to claim little items that the men have treasured.

Frank's loneliness is tempered by a little dog named Daisy that Wendell found at the pound and gave to Frank.

Frank is shattered when the dog is torn to pieces in an accident in his garden. Wendell, crushed by Frank's loss, begins a project to use his taxidermy skills to re-create Daisy from the parts remaining from the accident.

One of the novel's most poignant moments comes when Frank discovers the incomplete project and, though failing steadily, he falls in love again with the half-stuffed dog.

As the novel closes, this reader was moved not so much by the problems Frank and Wendell had as gay people, but the challenge of finding meaning at the end of life.

Wendell, who always fixed the meals, has trouble adjusting to cooking for just himself when the bedridden Frank eats only nutrient shakes. He has too much time to fill and finds "the biggest danger of all is an empty space in the day. It's easy, then, for the whole thing to break through and rush in and join the emptiness inside."

"You just go on living," Wendell says. "You don't have to have a reason."

The novel's poignant story should not lead readers to overlook Griffin's lovely writing. His description of a Southern funeral gathering, the process of breaking down an animal's body and rebuilding it as a trophy, the joy and disappointments of gardening, sex, love and much more turns Frank and Wendell's lives into poetry.

The major problem with Griffin's first novel is that it will be difficult for him to write a better one.

D.G. Martin's UNC-TV North Carolina Bookwatch *interview with Matthew Griffin will air Sunday at noon on April 30 and Thursday at 5 p.m. on May 4. Bookwatch also airs on the North Carolina channel Fridays at 8 p.m. and Sundays at 10 a.m. Martin's wife, Harriet Martin, serves on the board of the Crook's Corner Book Prize Foundation.*

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Errors Unlikely to Occur

The adventures of Dram Tree Shakespeare continue with comedy

By Nicholas Gray

When Dram Tree Shakespeare thrust forth into our flourishing theater scene in 2015 with their inaugural production of *Macbeth*, they had much to prove. And prove it they did. Their departure from a typical "downtown director" (acclaimed UNCW theater professor Chris Marino), their high-risk utilization of an unconventional theater space (McEachern's Warehouse), and their near-introduction of theater-in-the-round to Wilmington all led to an immensely successful first-born.

Then they went and did it again last year with *The Tempest*, this time with a multi-Emmy Award winner at the helm (Michael Granberry) and a supreme spectacle of puppetry and theatrical magic our city had yet to see.

So, how does one follow one success after another without falling into same-ol', same-ol' territory? This go-around, they'll be making us laugh, thanks in much part to the creative mind behind their next endeavor, Philadelphia-based director Kathryn MacMillan. MacMillan joins us via Dram Tree Shakespeare's nationwide search for their next director, an in-depth process asking for both the what and the why. What show and why do it? Her answer to the what? *The Comedy of Errors*. The why? Through her research of the company's brief history, MacMillan crafted an intriguing triangulation with her proposal — where *MacBeth* was regarded for its masculinity, and *The Tempest* for its ethereality, the next logical step for DTS is to serve comedy. And so it was written.

The Comedy of Errors indulges in the silly. Two sets of identical twins, one pair in stature and one pair in servitude. As with any "Freaky Friday," mistaken identity ensues in great comic form. And furthering the comic strain, Shakespeare invites us into a delicious world of his wordplay and strange slapstick.

Taking cues from Will's wily slapstick, MacMillan vows to veer us straight into vaudeville with her take on this classic. She draws her vision of vaudeville from "the familiar tropes of commedia dell'arte, a form he would have seen since his childhood," she says.

"One of my goals when directing Shakespeare is to reveal to modern audiences how accessible Shakespeare can be," says MacMillian. "I wanted to use a familiar comedic form as a way into Shakespeare's world. Although vaudeville was at its height 100 years ago, its elements are still familiar to contemporary life: comedy duos, sister acts, song and dance, burlesque. Like Shakespeare and commedia, we've grown up with vaudeville. And many of the elements are the same, rendering the foreign — Shakespeare's language — familiar."

In a rather unique event, the public was invited to attend the first round of auditions at TheatreNOW, as somewhat of a vaudeville show itself, seeking those skilled in "playing a musical instrument, juggling, singing and dancing, partner acts, tumbling, hat moves, unicycle, (and/or) stand-up." Notably, they were also seeking a pet that can do tricks. We've learned to expect only the ambitious from DTS.

As for how she might win with her twinning, MacMillan had several strategies at hand as to how she could illustrate her two sets of identicals. But it would all come down to casting. As history reminds with DTS, is there little doubt we will be seeing some of Wilmington's finest actors come opening night, perhaps squirting seltzer in each other's faces or smoking exploding cigars? We can't say.

Despite all of the silliness, MacMillan brings much stature to her time here and the continuation of DTS with an urging to bring "clarity, accessibility, and joy" in making Shakespearean text "easy on the ear" to our audiences. And, as with any "comedy of errors" — as the term has come to evolve — personal, public, political or provincial, it's only clarity and accessibility that allow us to find the joy in it all, after all.

The Comedy of Errors runs April 13-30 at the DREAMS Garage, 901 Fanning St., Wilmington. Thursdays – Saturdays, 7:30 p.m., Sundays 3 p.m. Tickets: $25 adults, $20 students/senior/military, $10 theater and film industry professionals (opening night only). Info and tickets at www.dramtreeshakes.org.

Nicholas Gray is the former artistic director of City Stage Co.

PHOTOGRAPH BY MARK STEELMAN

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Always Good Company

Elsie Shields is always smiling, especially over spicy Thai salad

By Dana Sachs

PHOTOGRAPHS BY JAMES STEFIUK

When Elsie Shields and I meet for lunch one day at Big Thai Restaurant in Landfall Center, she describes the early part of her morning by listing activities that a lot of people hate: "Washing sheets, watering plants, making breakfast and snacks."

But Elsie looks quite pleased about her day so far. She has a big smile on her face when she adds, "and then I did it all again."

That smile doesn't seem to be unusual for Elsie, which is a good thing for a person who runs a business called Always Good Company. Elsie and her staff of eight provide good company in the form of companionship care for adults who need assistance. In this line of work, it helps to have a sunny disposition, particularly on a busy day. This morning has been busy. First, Elsie met with Betty, an 88-year-old woman, and then she went to visit Marion, who is 88 too. At Marion's place, "I knocked on the door, then let myself in with the key. First, I made her coffee and while she drank it, I fed the cat, made her bed, opened the blinds, then made her eggs, got her the newspaper, emptied the dishwasher, scooped the litter box, cleaned her bathroom and helped her get dressed."

Most of Elsie's clients are elderly people who want to maintain their engagement with the world but don't necessarily have the energy or stamina to do so independently. Elsie and her staff help by taking them, for example, to manicure appointments, physical therapy or the library. Sometimes they go out for lunch or stop somewhere for a beer. The goal lies in helping people remain active and stimulated, not necessarily in accomplishing any specific goal together. At the library, for example, Elsie says, "they check out lots of books. If they don't read them, we take them back. What's the difference?"

Elsie opened the business in 2013, and she's found that she loves interacting with her clients. "I could get wisdomy, but honestly, you get to a certain age and you realize that none of the stuff you worry about matters."

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Wisdomy or not, Elsie doesn't need anyone to teach her that lesson. She learned it herself, the hard way. In 2006, when Elsie was 37, she and her husband, Patrick, were running The Everyday Gourmet, their shop in Porter's Neck, and raising two boys, 2-year-old Aidan and 5-year-old Patrick. They had opened the store 10 years earlier, but it had only recently become a success. Patrick, a professional chef, was catering for private airlines and, in May of that year, Harris Teeter made a deal with him to start selling The Everyday Gourmet brand of chicken salad in area stores.

"That never happened," Elsie says. Patrick died a few days later.

He had gone to Atlanta to celebrate his goddaughter's First Communion. Late at night, after spending the evening with his family, he fell while walking down the stairs at his brother's house. His head hit a step, killing him instantly. Back home in Wilmington, Elsie was wondering why she hadn't heard from her husband. And then, a few hours later, a family member showed up at the house.

"I swear to you, no cliché, I couldn't have gotten through without friends and family," she tells me, describing those early days when she became a widow and her sons lost their dad. Eventually, Elsie sold the business, and she has since remarried, too. "You never get over it," she says, "But now, 10 years later, I can remember something about Pat without getting too upset." Still, her tone turns wistful when she says, "The bottom line was, we were very happy."

Elsie's years at The Everyday Gourmet taught her how to manage a business, and competence with budgeting, staffing and marketing remains a useful skill in running Always Good Company. Years in the food industry probably helped too, because in companion care, cooking for clients is "a major thing."

I can see why Elsie's clients like to go out with her for lunch. At Big Thai, she's both enthusiastic and discerning. We try a range of dishes, including a tangy fresh papaya salad, a chicken with basil that has a spicy kick, and crab fried rice topped with big pieces of crabmeat arrayed in the shape of a star.

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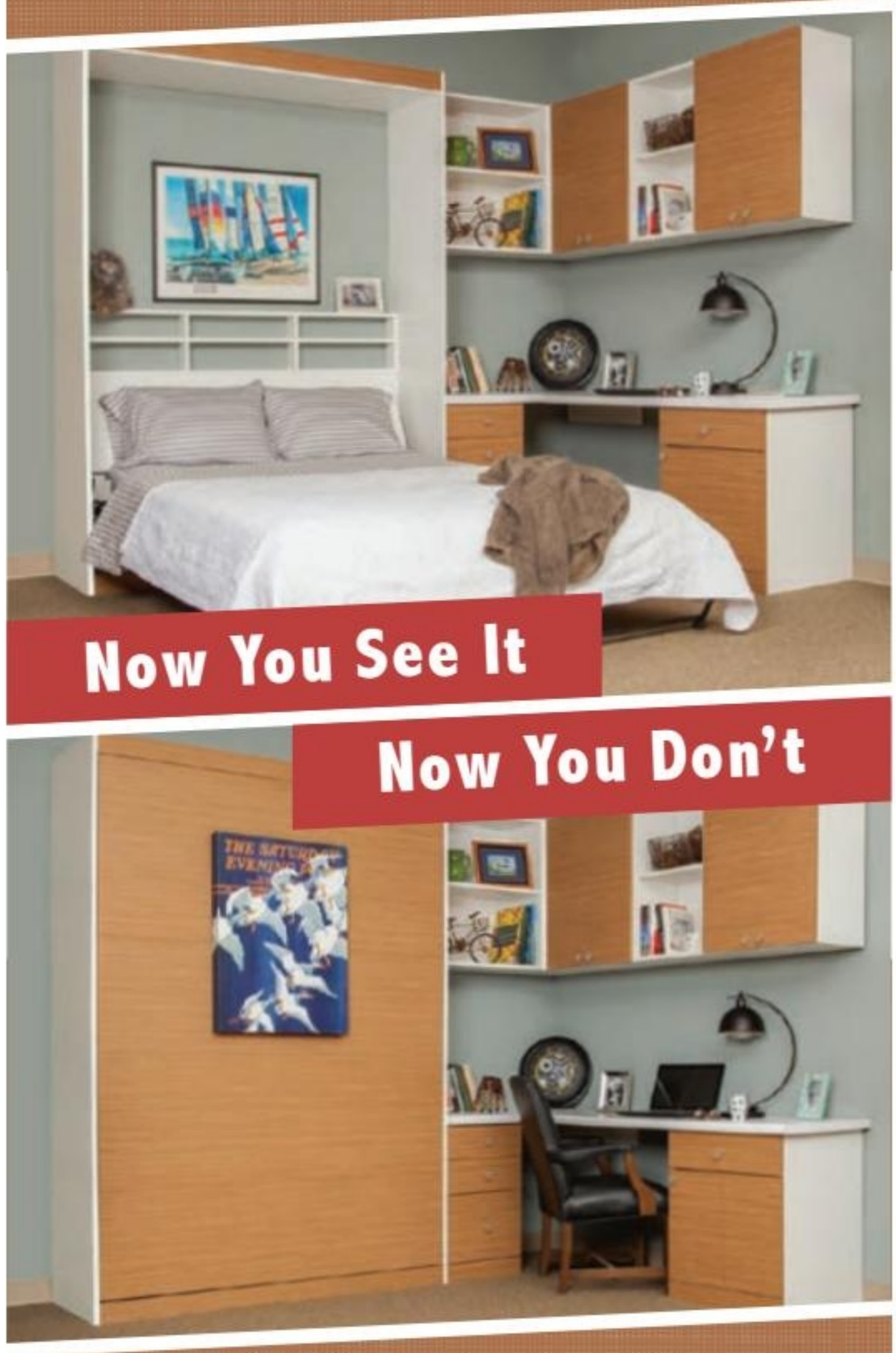

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Once the fried rice appears, we're too busy eating to talk. Then, Elsie starts to laugh. "Oh, my God, I love it," she says. "It sounds silly, but it's just warm and that first bite is really comforting." If the vegetables in the beef pineapple curry seem a bit too similar to the ones in the chicken (lots of carrots, lots of peppers), we forget about that when a big slice of coconut cake arrives for dessert. "I love how fresh it is, so soft and moist," says Elsie, after her first bite. Then, she makes a quick calculation, and, sounding like a judge at the Pillsbury Bake-Off, announces, "Cake to icing ratio: Not too much, not too little."

Elsie tells me that she's learned a lot from her clients, including the importance of remaining active throughout life. "What a difference," she says, "between the people who sit around in a chair and watch TV and the person who gets exercise."

"Exercise," she goes on to explain, doesn't mean that an 88-year-old needs to be running sprints. Rather, people need to be out and about, engaged with the world for as long as possible. "I'm talking about getting up and going to the grocery store." Elsie has a client, in fact, who loves to go to Harris Teeter just to greet people. "She says to everyone, 'Well, hello there!' It's all about the attitude."

Attitude, in Elsie's opinion, can turn even a mundane wander through the deli aisle into a little adventure. "Even if we don't buy anything," she explains, "we love the free samples." Then Elsie Shields leans back in her chair and, with a glint in her eye, says, "We're all about the free samples." At this moment, she doesn't sound like a business owner so much as a member of a savvy club that's figured out the secret to a healthy life. And she seems grateful to be part of it.

Big Thai Restaurant is located at 1319 Military Cutoff Road, in the Landfall Shopping Center. You can find out more at (910) 256-6588 or at www.bigthainc.com. For information about Always Good Company, call (910) 538-5207 or visit www.goodcompanyhomecare.com.

Dana Sachs' latest novel, The Secret of the Nightingale Palace, *is available at bookstores, online and throughout Wilmington.*

PHOTOGRAPHS BY ALEXIA BLUE

Eden Nichole Anderson, Nydheri Brown, Kylie Madison Lundy, Cammy Celeste Herbert, Hadley Todd, Bonnie Fawcett

Pretty Pages

Read before wearing

By Isabel Zermani

Merging fashion and all things literary, the New Hanover County Public Library hosted its third annual design contest and runway show for teens (ages 13–18) dubbed "Fiction to Fashion" at EXPO 216, co-hosted by *Salt*. These teens took to not just novels, but to children's books, comic books, maps, magazines, cassettes and CDs — all too worn for library lending and ready to be recycled — for inspiration for their looks.

Some married content to concept, creating a '20s frock from pages of *The Great Gatsby* or a superhero stunner from Spider-man comics. A lion's mane inspired a headpiece and earring set fringed with pages from *Andy and the Lion*. A crown of fragmented jewels from snapped CDs topped off a prima ballerina look that gave us *Frozen* feels.

Folded, rolled, burned and bound, these teens laced up (often with cassette tape string) and hit the runway with enviable style and astonishing substance.

Molly Christensen

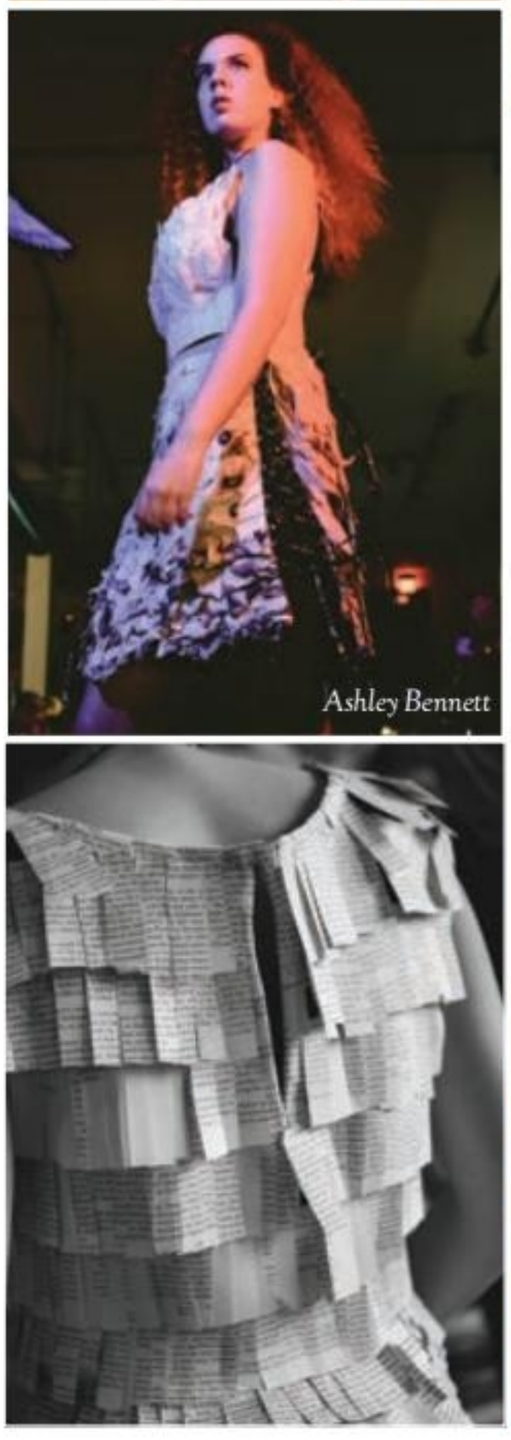
Jaya Henry

Trista Guidi

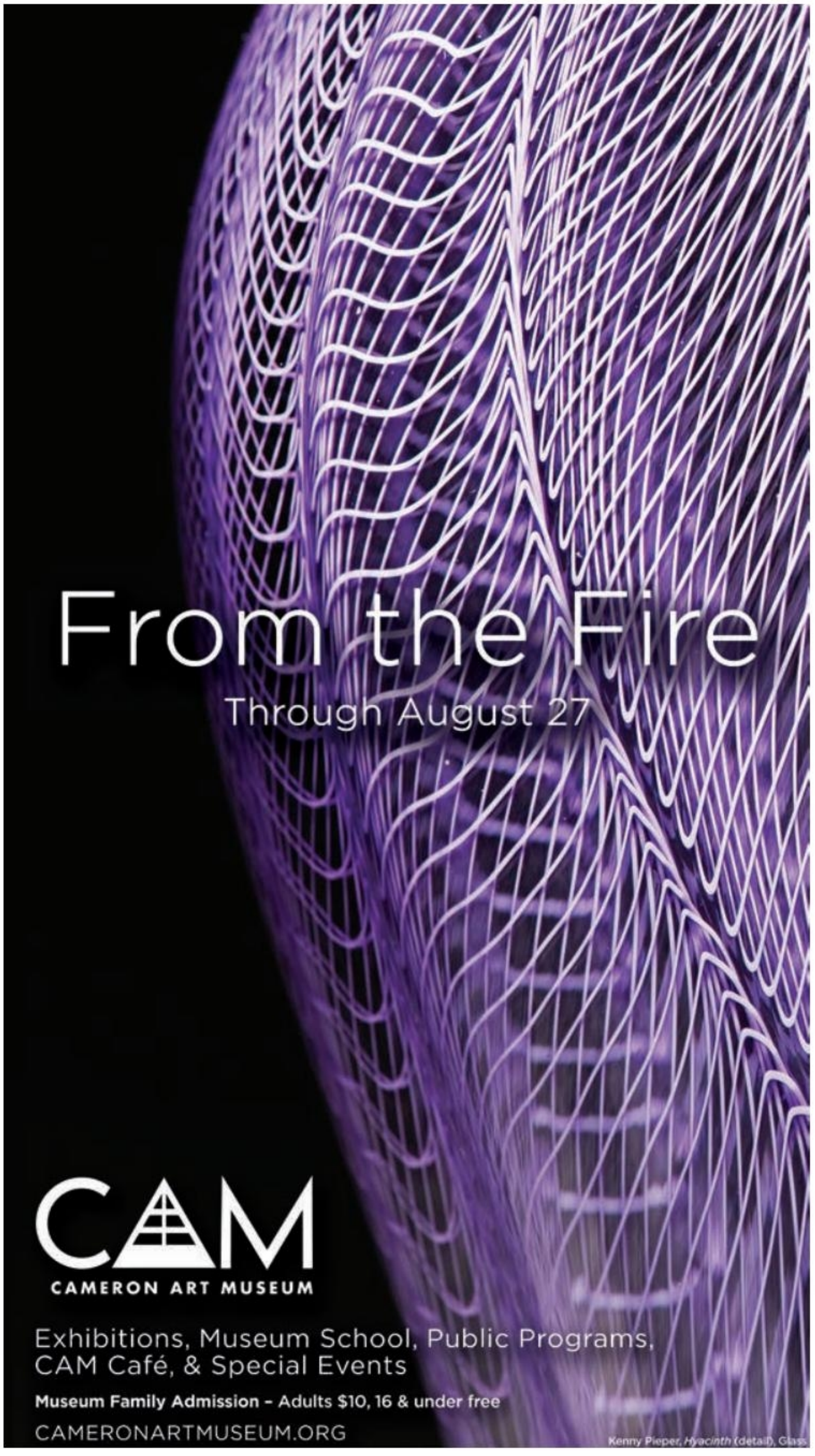
Emma Claire Lisk

Brandy Moore

Skyler Perez



Ashley Bennett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Growing Strong

How one pioneering Dutch family has kept us in bloom for a century

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By Jamie Penn

Just few miles down Castle Hayne Road will lead you to Tinga Nursery, a family nursery and plant wholesaler that's been in operation for over 100 years. How they got here and how they've stayed — propagating plants and flowers that keep us neck-deep in pink azaleas this time of year — begins in Holland, but is an American tale.

Eelco Idzard Tinga, circa 1906 — straight out of flower country in Holland and hungry for the American dream — happened on the scene in the U.S. just as Hugh McRae began waving the flag of hope and prosperity for emigrant farmers from what he fancied would soon be truck farming colonies. This, coupled with a blight-induced ban on all Holland bulb shipments in the 1920s, opened ample opportunity for Dutch bulb and flower farmers to gain a firm foothold in southeastern North Carolina.

The budding horticulturalist established Tinga Nursery just outside Wilmington in 1913, at the right place and the right time. But, no matter how devoted and fortunate the founder of a company, businesses rely on future generations to keeping it flourishing. What's the secret formula to Tinga Nursery's sustained success?

One hundred and four years after the nursery's inception and four Eelcos later, Eelco III — known as E3 — can't really put his finger on it.

"It's just what I do. It's what I've always done . . . I guess it just keeps going until it doesn't anymore," says E3, with pragmatic clarity. "Things have definitely changed, but people still need plants and we really like to grow them. We've got our system down. So, it works."

Eelco Jr. asserts very linear reasoning — "It's just in our blood."

And it might be in their names.

Each generation of Tingas for the last five generations (including the current one) have had an Eelco in the mix. An uncommon name to begin with, the Dutch name was first given to their predecessor. And of all of the Tinga children, the sons who carried the Eelco name were the ones to plant themselves firmly in the family business long-term (Herrick Tinga was also a staple at the nursery for many years). E3 is a horticulturist, as is Eelco Jr., as was Eelco Sr., and so on.

"One thing you can count on in the nursery business is that you never get bored," says E3, letting the smile — that supposedly all the Eelcos share — broaden over his face.

Could it be an etymological phenomenon? Eelco: "the man who seeks; master of himself; a man of balanced character" — all of which seem to define the three Eelcos that I've had the pleasure to meet.

Home is Where the Garden Is

The Tinga Nursery sits on 35 acres. It was here that E3 drove a tractor at age 8 and then zipped around in an old checker cab at the ripe age of 9 because his grandmother Mary Tinga, said it was about time. E3 worked alongside his dad in the potting shed, pruned plants in plastic-covered greenhouses, and dealt with customers when he could barely see over the counter. His grandmother would show up in class occasionally at Wrightsboro Elementary School less than a half a mile away to show his classmates how to spin wool. And, his grandfather would pot and prune plants behind the office where E3 later served as foreman well into his 80s.

The original Eelco Tinga had quite a different story.

Brought up in a family of bankers, he was actually the maverick in his family, starting a tradition all his own. He began spreading his wings in late 19th century Holland, when he decided to follow his passion. He studied horticulture in college and became a trained nurseryman in one of the most ideal places on Earth to learn the trade. He was a traveler early on, said Eelco Jr., visiting the U.S. several times before he landed here permanently.

"My grandfather," says Eelco, Jr. "was 100 percent American. He was extremely proud to be here. And, he worked hard to be as American as possible."

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GARDEN LIFE

While a Dutch accent is a great sales tool in the plant business, the original Eelco would have none of it.

"He trained himself to have a perfect American accent," remembers Eelco Jr.

Eelco Idzard Tinga chose to phase out his very obviously Dutch middle name when Eelco Sr. was born, giving him the classic American middle name of Henry. With that, the Eelco Henry Tinga tradition began. And, it's still going. Eelco H. Tinga IV is now 15 years old. His father, E3, his mother, Melissa, his brother Fisher and he live in their late Uncle John Tinga's house, about a 30-second walk from the family nursery across the street.

They've All Come to Look for America

When Eelco I. Tinga landed on Long Island in 1906, he obtained work in a rose nursery. He met Hugo Van Nes, also Dutch, and they began dreaming together. Shortly after the two took notice of fliers that littered the port advertising Hugh McRae's 10-acre plots available to Dutch settlers, they set off in search of the American Dream they had come for.

In an unexpected partnership, Hugh McRae — businessman, conservative capitalist, and land owner in Wilmington, N.C.— and Frederick Van Eeden a Dutch Utopian philosopher and socialist — started building and promoting emigrant colonies intended to be self-sustaining communities. Together, McCrae and Van Eeden painted a picture that Dutch settlers flocked to.

Tinga and Van Nes arrived in 1908, having purchased two 10-acre plots in what is now known as the Castle Hayne loop.

Of the six colonies created by McCrae and Van Eeden, Castle Hayne was undoubtedly the most successful. "That area's actually really good for flowers. The soil's fairly sandy up there. Good drainage" explains Eelco Jr..

While diversity was key early on, Van Nes and Tinga were horticulturalists, and bulbs and plants became their focus.

But, much to Van Eeden and McRae's dismay, a Utopian society was not born, nor did trucks overflow with shipments of produce. The farmers who succeeded were those who chose to cater to the dairy demand and others who grew bulbs for flowers that were suddenly a priority in the early '20s when a blight swept the old country.

Three of the six colonies farthest from town failed, and while the farmers in successful colonies like Castle Hayne inevitably offered support to one

another when necessary, it became each man and each family for themselves fairly quickly.

Van Nes bought out Eelco Tinga in 1913 shortly after Van Nes met the woman he would marry. So, Tinga strategically headed toward town, settling on two 10-acre plots in what is now Wrightsboro, just a few miles from downtown Wilmington. There, he established Tinga Nursery and Truck Farm.

In the beginning, Tinga hunkered down at night in a nearby boarding house, walking a quarter-mile or so to the land before the sun came up to tend the farm and eventually build the Craftsman-style bungalow that his 90-year-old daughter-in-law, Mary Tinga, still lives in today. Tinga had a large garden, a few crops, a cow and chickens to help feed his family (his wife, Tijitske, known as "Jesse," and their three boys) and to contribute to truck shipments.

Tinga immediately dove into the bulb and flower business. Daffodils, gladiolas, Dutch Iris and peonies soon speckled the landscape. Other Dutch farmers followed suit and McCrae's three thriving colonies quickly became known as "Flower Country" across the U.S.

PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY OF TINGA NURSERY

Tried, True and Something New

So much on the Tingas' 35 acres is the same. The bungalow, the wash house in the back, the hay barn, the bulb barn and Louie's room (a small structure behind the main house last occupied by Louie Cantrella, a Dutch foreman sponsored by Tinga in 1924) are all products of the original Eelco. The house is on the National Register of Historic Places, and nearly everything else on the property has been designated historic by the Historic Wilmington Foundation. The structures have hardly been touched aside from the occasional rotten wood replacement and interior updates. The big church bell that used to call men in from the field to help a customer or little ones in for meals by their grandmother sits on its side against the bulb barn still shining in memories.

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Young live oaks, glossy-leaved camellias, wispy wisteria and bright strokes of perennials still hail from their plastic pots in neat rows (and have since the '50s); and greenhouses and shade houses continue to line the landscape.

Yes, such longevity, and preservation could be attributed to proverbial Dutch pragmatism and frugality, but it could also just be because it works and has always worked.

"We grow the plants our customers want, and we always have," says Eelco Jr.

Most of what Tinga Nursery sells and has always sold, since its inception in 1913, begins on-site. The Tingas propagate at least 80 percent of the plants, flowers and trees they carry.

Aside from dropping the landscaping arm of the business, and jumping out and back into the retail business, what customers want is the biggest change the nursery has encountered. Eelco H. Tinga Sr. eliminated bulb production and transitioned to nursery plants.

"People sort of stopped gardening. We're all just too busy now. So, someone's doing it for them, and those guys generally come in and buy a lot of a small selection," says Eelco Jr.. So, instead of carrying dozens of varieties of azaleas for the savvy Southern garden, they now carry less varieties, but sell just as many.

But for those few home-gardening stragglers, weekend gardeners or specialty shops, the Tingas grow and serve to suit. Now the Tingas are developing their own varietals and custom grow rare and sought-after plants like the mother vine, a scuppernong grape vine discovered by the first explorers in 1584 on Roanoke Island, specialty blueberries and hard-to-find flowering shrubs.

And it's this kind of service, says E3, that keeps customers coming back.

"We do some shipping, but most of our customers are local, and have been with us for a really long time. They know what to expect when they come here. They know they can get what they want and that we know what we're talking about," he said.

"That's right," said Eelco Jr. "By now, we ought to know, I guess." Cue that Eelco Tinga smile.

Jamie Penn is a writer, mother of three. The more she discovers and uncovers historically, culturally, and otherwise about the area, the more she falls in love with calling it home.

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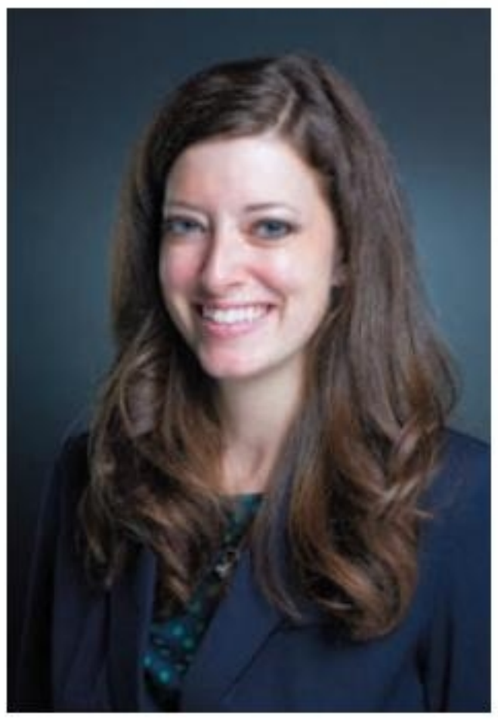

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2012-2013 Fellow for Borchard Foundation Center for Law and Aging, Co-Chair Membership Committee Elder and Special Needs Law Section of the North Carolina State Bar, Program Chair for the New Hanover County Estate Planning Council.

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Join us as Jim Dodson reviews and signs copies of his latest book. "The Range Bucket List: The Golf Adventure of a Lifetime" is scheduled for official release on May 9th and is his collection of fascinating behind-the-scenes stories from his last 30+ years that have never been told until now. In this tribute to the game he loves, Jim Dodson will take you on a journey around the world and into the lives of characters large and small.

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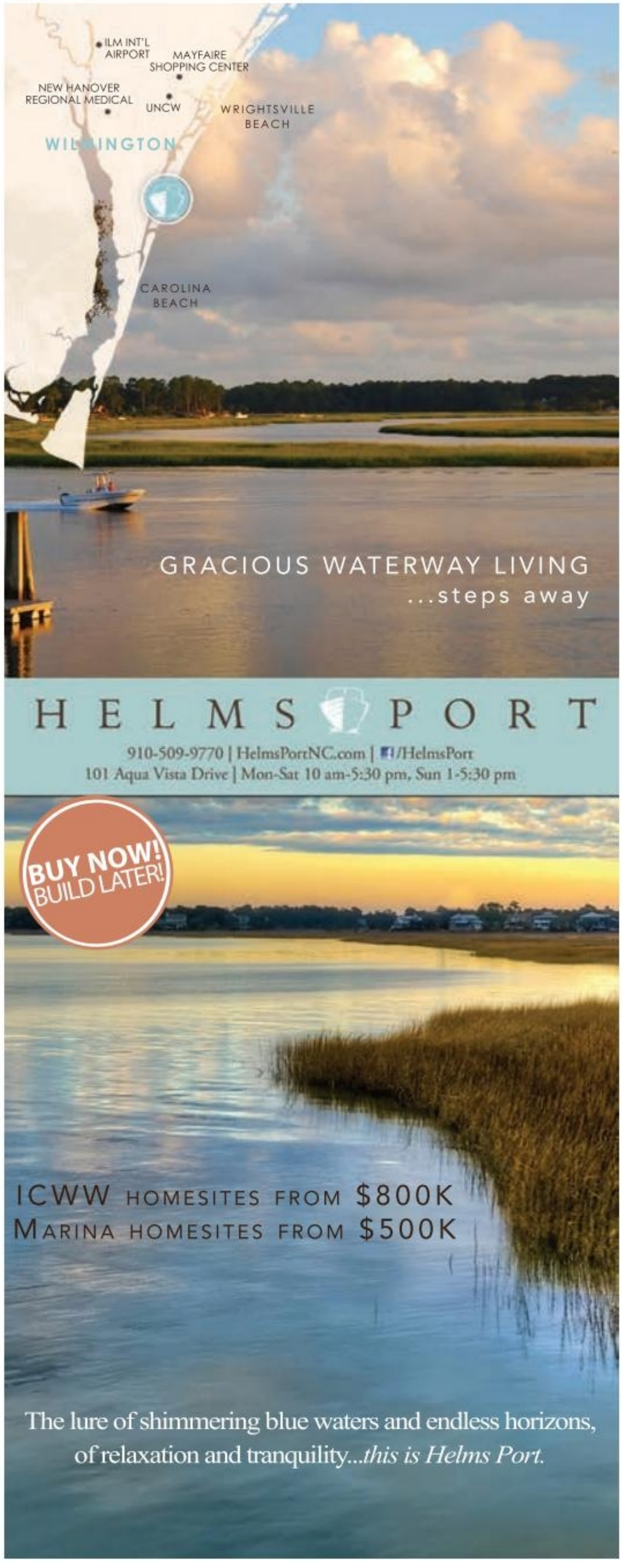
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I'm in the Plume for Love

Great Egrets abound in breeding season

By Susan Campbell

Spring fever is upon us; it's time for the breeding season! Here in coastal North Carolina we have some 16 species of waders that spend the spring and summer nesting and raising the next generation. The most noticeable one is unarguably the great egret, mistakenly referred to as a "white crane." This large wading bird has all-white plumage and a long, pointed, bright yellow bill and black legs.

Individuals or small groups of great egrets are drawn to bodies of water both small and large. Egrets stalk small fish, frogs, grayfish and other small prey in the shallows. Occasionally they will snatch a snake, small bird or large insect, as well. Great egrets will roost in thick, older pines over water, where ground predators are not likely to reach them. In our area, they may join dozens or even hundreds of other individuals, finding safety in numbers.

During the breeding period, from March through June, great egrets sport long plumes along their backs. At the turn of the 20th century, the species was nearly wiped out as a result of the millinary trade. Plume hunters decimated rookeries throughout the coastal U.S. In fact, at the verge of their extinction, the egret became the symbol of the Audubon Society. As the oldest and largest bird conservation organization in the United States, it was originally founded to protect birds from being killed for their feathers. At present day, as with most of our wading species, great egrets have made a strong recovery.

Great egrets are found in heronries, most often alongside great blue herons, throughout the Coastal Plain. Nesting habitat consists of sturdy trees usually on islands, free of mammalian predators. Simple stick platforms are constructed by the males and placed high in the canopy. Nests can be quite large, up to a few feet across and a foot or so deep. One to six eggs are laid and incubated for almost four weeks by the female. The young are then fed by both parents for about a month before they are capable of flight. If there is a shortage of food, aggressive larger siblings are known to kill smaller ones.

Fledglings may follow their parents for a few weeks or may become independent quickly, if food resources are scarce. Both adult and young great egrets will disperse from their breeding areas to find new feeding areas. They are often seen in late summer on inland lakes, even in our mountain counties. Breeding individuals may be mixed in with migrants around lakes, beaver ponds, creek or river floodplains, even water hazards on golf courses. Regardless, these pale giants do not tend to stay in one place for very long at any point during the year. So, should you come upon an egret, enjoy it because it likely will not be around more than a day or two at most, sometimes just a few blissful hours.

Susan would love to receive your wildlife sightings and photos at susan@ncaves.com.

Ghost Whisperers

What the lower Cape Fear's perishing cypress trees are trying to tell us

Ghost trees along Smith Creek in Wilmington

STORY AND PHOTOGRAPHS BY VIRGINIA HOLMAN

As visitors to Wilmington arrive along the I-74 corridor or down the Martin Luther King Jr. Parkway from the airport, they are greeted by a haunting scene: hundreds of weather-silvered trees — tupelo, cypress, gum — some festooned with long swaying beards of Spanish moss. It's a melancholy sight. There's an eerie beauty to these "ghost forests," but it's the same sort of beauty one finds in old cemeteries where lichen decorates nameless weathered headstones. And though every living thing is said to have a natural season to flourish and to die, most of these trees were killed before their time. The cause is human activity that led to saltwater intrusion in our inland tidal creeks.

The Cape Fear River is the only river in North Carolina that flows directly into the Atlantic Ocean, and if you've ever been on the river when the tide has recently turned, you may have been privy to an amazing sight: a tideline of brilliant emerald ocean water pushing against the sweet tea-colored Cape Fear. This line in the water, according to Sandie Cecelski, director of Ashley High School's Marine Science Academy, is part of a "salt wedge." When saltwater and freshwater collide, they don't mix easily. Saltwater is more dense than freshwater, so when the two meet, as they do in near the mouth of the Cape Fear, the freshwater floats above the saltwater, so the saltwater must flow below. To get an idea of what this looks like beneath the river's surface, think of a rectangle that's bisected diagonally, forming two wedges. The freshwater is on top and the saltwater on the bottom. The highest point of the diagonal is that dramatic dividing line you see on the water. The first time I kayaked along a salt wedge tideline, the demarcation line appeared to simmer. I then saw it was a bit of a fish trap — dolphins and a racket of terns arrived to feast on a menhaden buffet.

Farther up the lower Cape Fear, in the estuarine marshes between Bald Head and Wilmington, saltwater and freshwater mix well and provide critical nursery habitats for North Carolina's fisheries. (Not incidentally, recreational and commercial fishing are important economic drivers for southeastern North Carolina.) Slightly inland, still intact freshwater swamp forests and wetlands can be seen in larger tracts of preserved land like Carolina Beach State Park. These wetlands house salt-intolerant trees such as cypress, swamp maple and tupelo. When saltwater intrusion begins, it's often these freshwater wetlands that first become "ghost forests," a somber warning sign of an environment under tremendous stress.

Living swamp forests and estuaries serve important functions. Cecelski explains that just as our saltwater and estuarine marshes protect inland areas from storm surge and filter storm water contaminants, our riparian swamp forests "act like a sponge, collecting, filtering, and breaking down many contaminants in surface runoff." These pollutants would otherwise flow directly into the river and, in the case of the Cape Fear, into the ocean with the outgoing tide.

The past 50 years have seen the local landscape alter at a rapid pace: Swamp forest wetlands have been filled to build roads, parking lots, homes and shopping centers. To avoid flooding the property built on former freshwater wetlands, we push the storm water that collects on these impervious surfaces to a network of pipes and ditches that lead to the water where we fish and swim. Storm water once filtered by those wetlands is now laden with pollutants like pesticides, herbicides and animal feces.

Dr. Larry Cahoon, a professor in UNCW's Biology and Marine Biology Department, has witnessed the ruin of vast swaths of the county's wetlands. "Much of New Hanover County is freshwater wetlands, or was; now it's Pine Valley and places like that. I remember flying over the county in a small plane back in the early 1980s, and I was amazed at how much sunlight was reflected off standing water throughout much of the county. Much of it was forested wetland, especially the northeast and southern part of the county, where they've subsequently built all those developments on South College Road."

Rapid development also comes with a steep price tag. From 1999 to 2016, approximately $42 million was spent on storm water drainage mitigation in the city of Wilmington alone. The design, permitting and implementation of Wilmington's currently planned storm water capital improvement projects from 2017 to 2020 are projected to total an additional $32 million.

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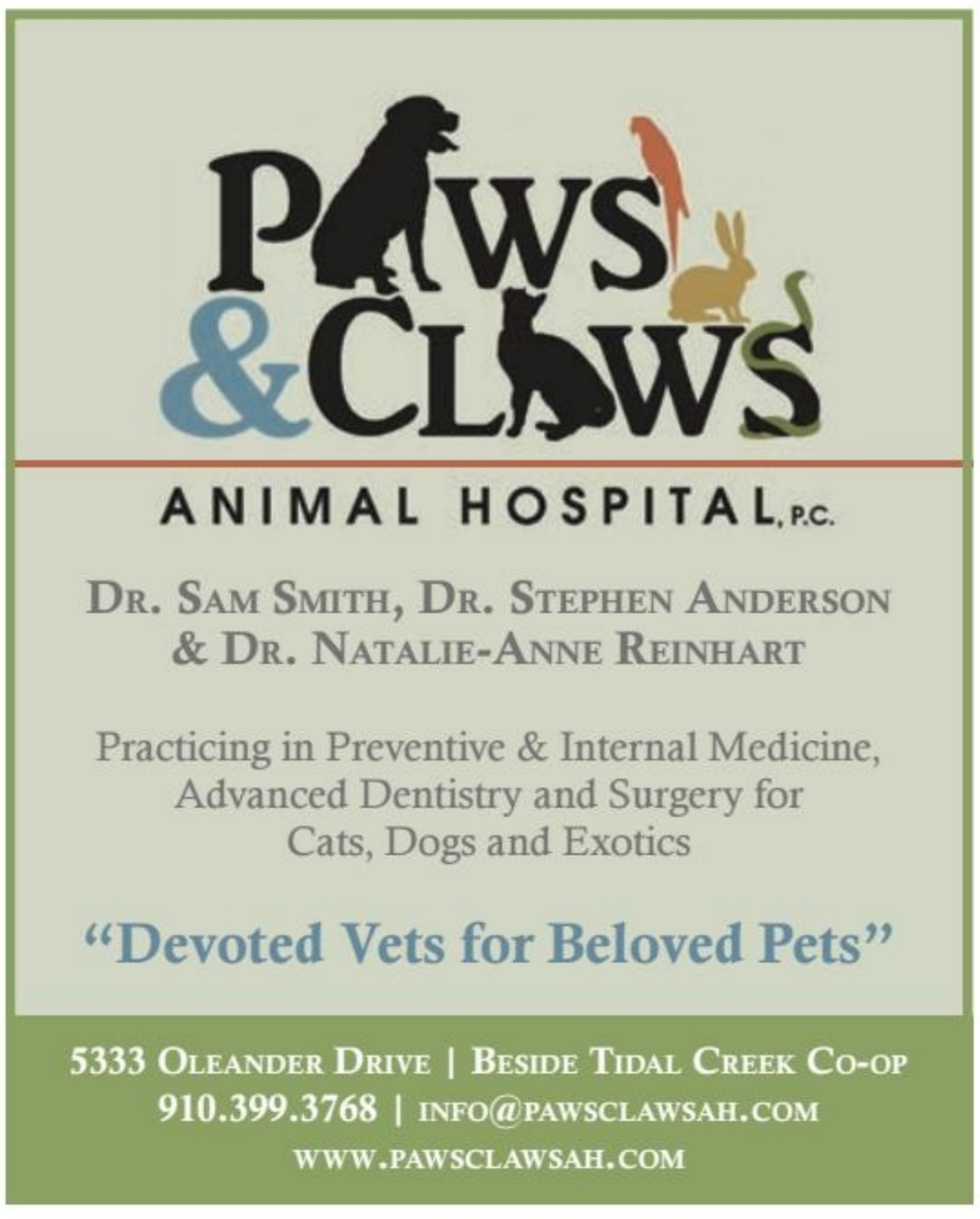
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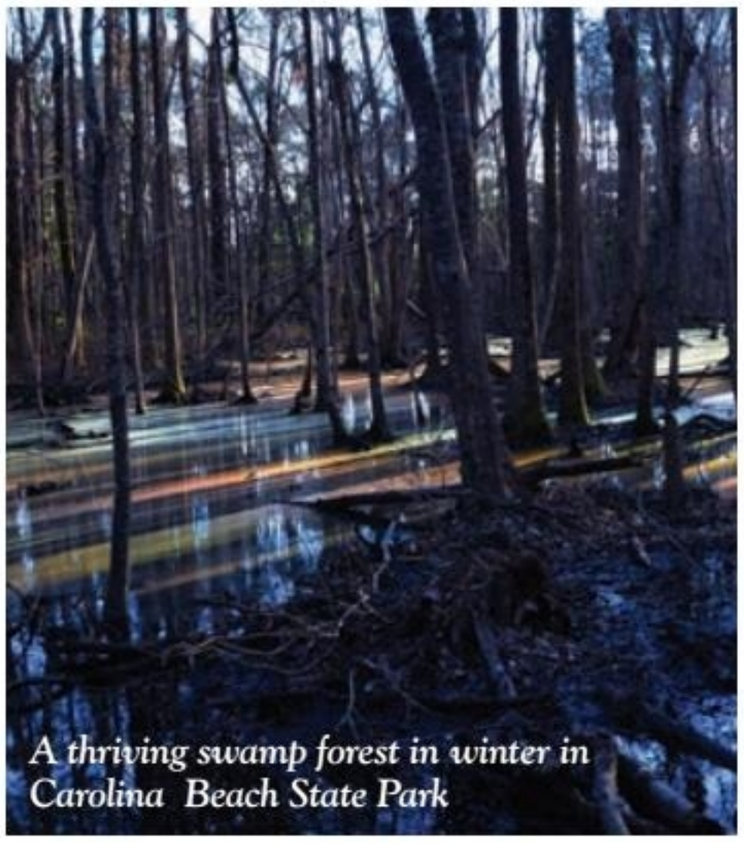


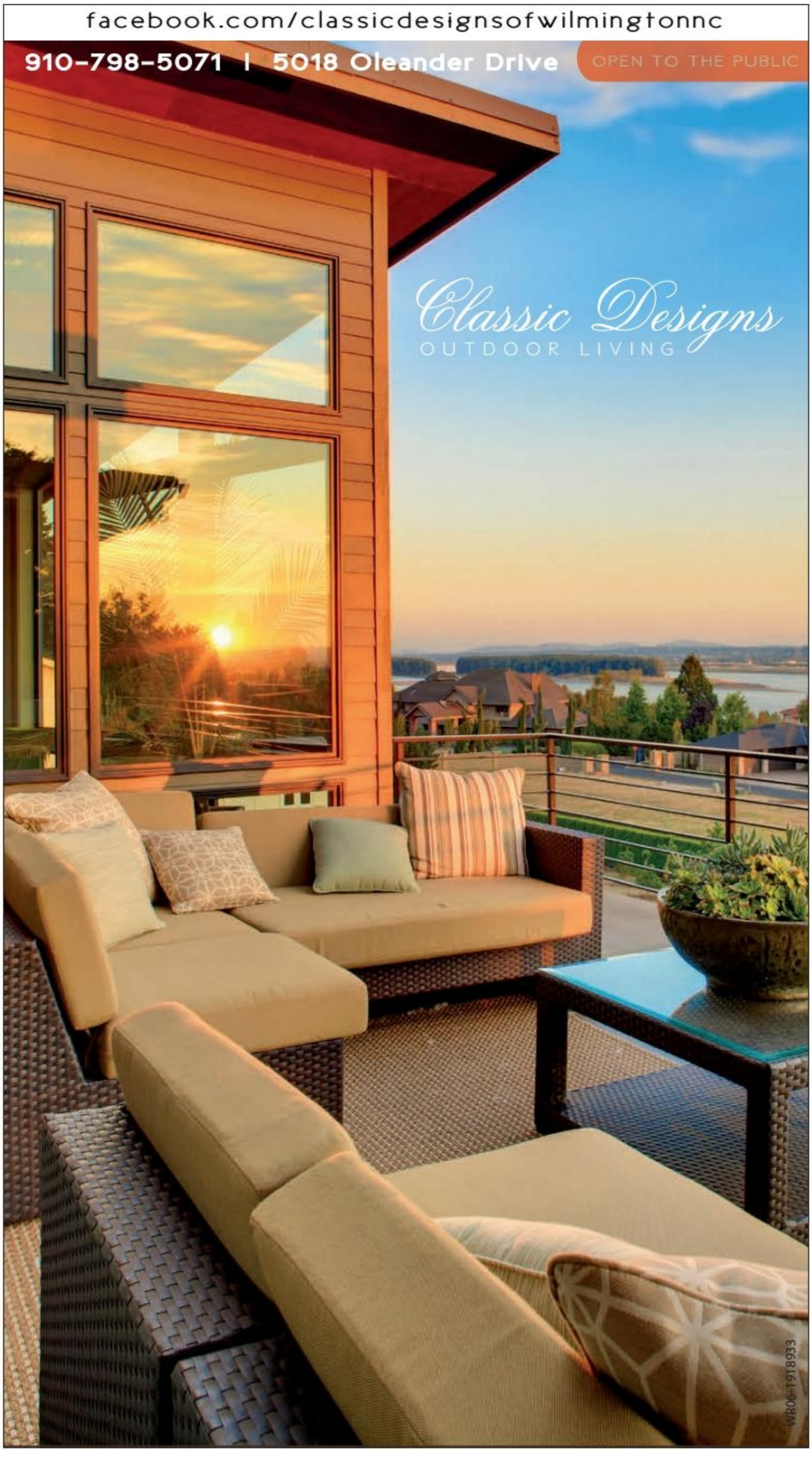
A thriving swamp forest in winter in Carolina Beach State Park

"The sentinel of the freshwater wetland is the cypress tree," says Cahoon. "They are the first to die when a freshwater wetland becomes salinized." Cahoon notes that after 2000, "We saw a surge in cypress tree die-offs in many of the creeks" of the Cape Fear — including areas like Smith Creek, which can be seen from Martin Luther King Jr. Parkway — after the shipping channel was deepened 4 feet from mouth to port. "Those trees grew when the marsh was freshwater and they died as the marsh became salinized, so they are a good indicator of change over time."

Professor Cahoon gives me a basic primer on how deepening the river channel causes an increase in salinization. "A deeper channel means the volume of sea water that can enter the river increases. Because we have tides, the water sloshes up and down the river, and one of the effects that you can have is an amplification of the tidal range at the top of the estuary. You've got all this water sloshing upstream toward downtown Wilmington, and when it gets there, it runs into all these small river channels and creeks. We have seen a significant increase in the tidal amplitude at high tide in downtown Wilmington."

Though it seems counterintuitive, droughts also allow for an increase of intrusion. When river flow drops due to drought, he explains, the freshwater volume is replaced by salty ocean water. Cahoon says there is reliable data that shows during major drought events, like the one we had in 2007, salinity levels increase as far up as the confluence of the Cape Fear River and the Black River, which is several miles downstream from Lock and Dam Number One. "Most of the time," he says, "you don't have a lot of saltwater much above the northern edge of the city since salinity levels vary with the river flow." But many areas have detectable salinity much of the time. "You can taste the river by the Battleship — though you may not want to — and you'll find it's slightly salty."

In addition, a recent study published in the



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September 2016 issue of "Geophysical Research Letters" indicated that the deepening of the Cape Fear River has dramatically increased the effects of tides and storm surge along the riverbank. Models indicate that storm surge from a category five hurricane in the 19th century, when the shipping channels were half their current depth, would have been around 12 feet. Currently, it is estimated at 18 feet.

Saltwater intrusion affects more than the natural world: It affects our infrastructure. "Along the coast, like in Carolina Beach, if you dig a hole, you are going to hit water sooner at high tide than low. The high tide actually raises and lowers the groundwater levels, so when you get a high tide there, it affects the groundwater levels. Our sewer pipes are in the ground," says Cahoon. "When large tidal events like spring and king tides occur, the infrastructure in the ground is inundated with saltwater." The same is true of storm surge. "Sewage is pretty corrosive as is, and saltwater makes it worse."

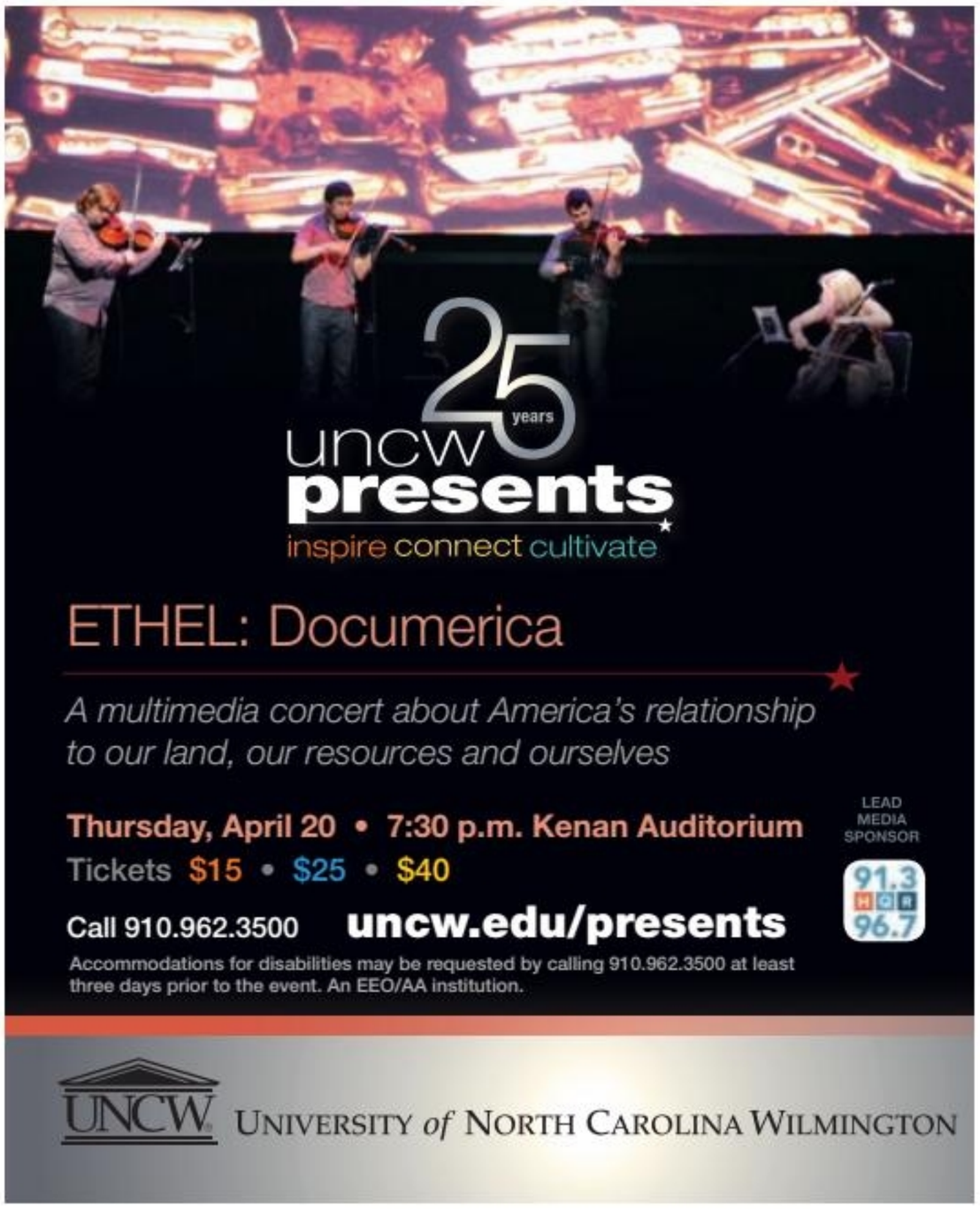
Cahoon points out a few additional salient facts. "Saltwater contains sodium chloride as well as sulfate, which is a source of oxygen for anaerobic bacteria. So, when seawater enters a sewage system, the bacteria will use that sulfate as a source of oxygen. The byproduct is hydrogen sulfide, which smells like rotten eggs. So, what's wrong with that? Hydrogen sulfide is very reactive, and it reacts with metal. It forms metallic sulfides, so the metal parts are degraded. In addition, sulfide reacts with the calcium in concrete and it actually will degrade the concrete they use to make manholes. If your manholes are exposed long enough, they will degrade and come apart.

"Some of our sewer pipes are built from materials that are not that tough. In New Hanover County we used a lot of cast iron pipes, which disintegrate. The countywide sewer system was installed in the late 1980s." The average cost to install a sewer system in United States, says Cahoon, is a staggering million dollars per mile. "We have over 900 miles of sewer pipes in New Hanover County."

Cahoon says that sea level rise will exacerbate all of these issues. "And whether you believe in sea level rise or not," he laughs, "it believes in you, and it's coming for you."

It's unclear what we can do to try to slow the effects of saltwater intrusion. After all, it's hard to quickly recreate a wooded freshwater wetland once it's dead or gone. What's clear is that those ghostly cypress trees are telling us something, and we'd do well to listen.

Author Virginia Holman, a regular Salt *contributor, teaches in the creative writing department at UNC Wilmington.*



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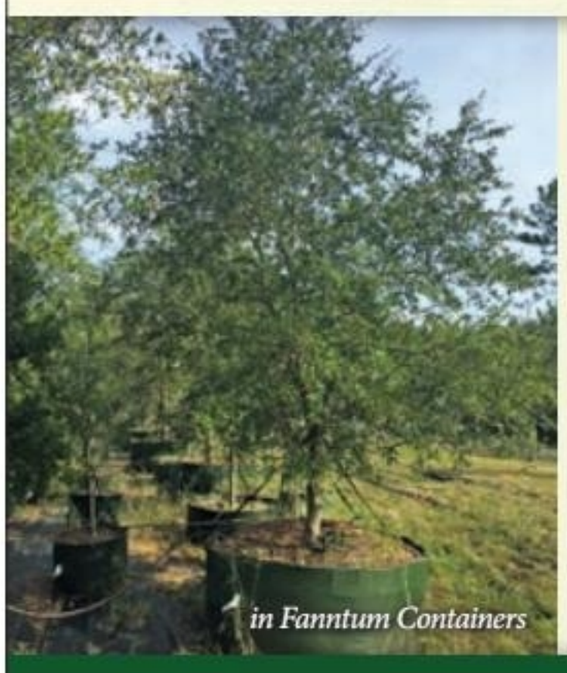
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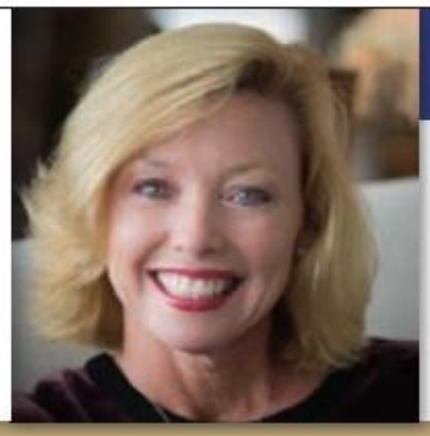

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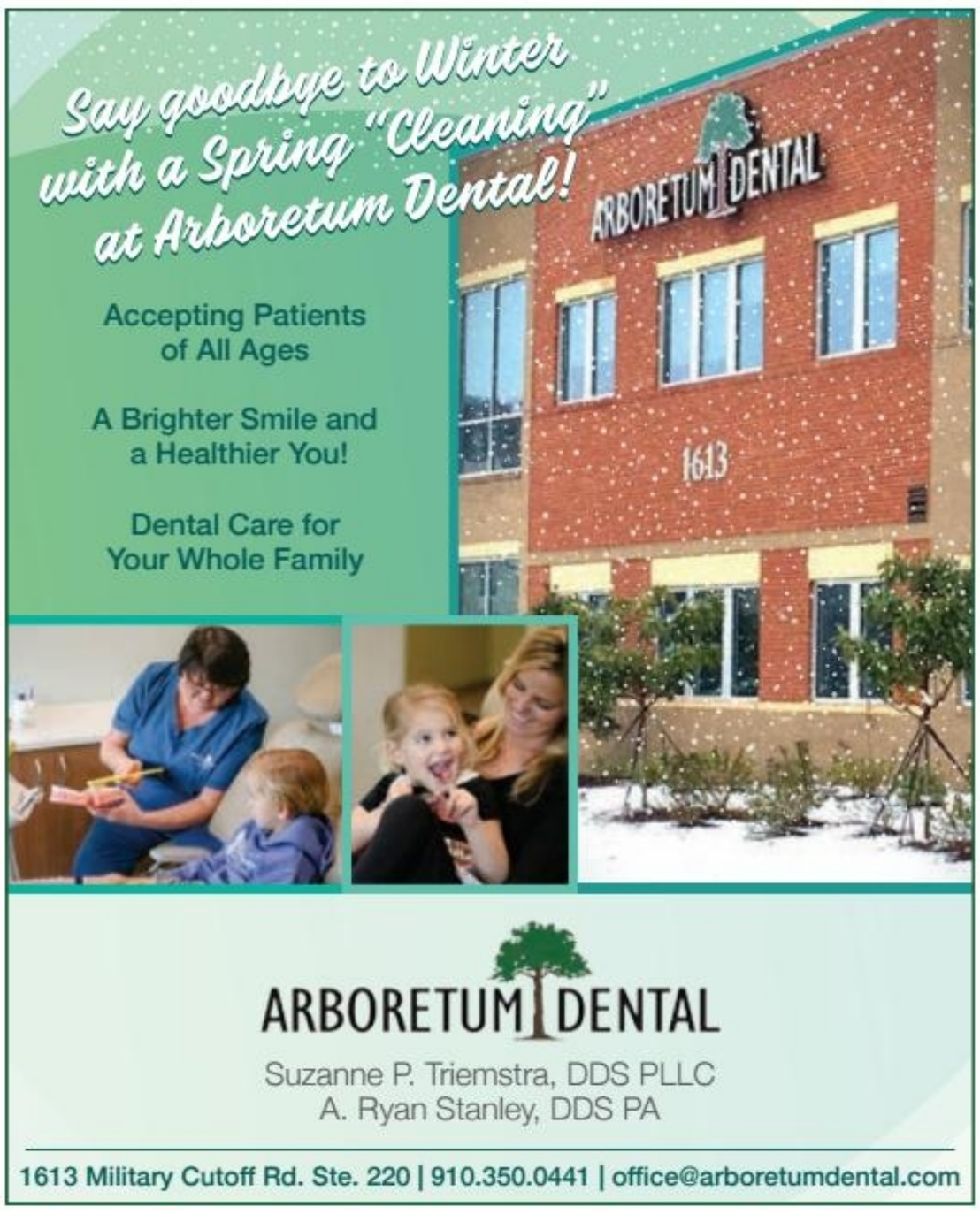

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First, who made God, God?
Who decided angels didn't
need fur, tails and whiskers?

Consider tail as a talking point.
Consider tail as a tour guide.
Consider tail conversational mapping.

But whiskers — ah, they let you
nuzzle a nuzzle. Soft, sexy.
Whiskers are out there
antennae catching vibes.
Whiskers are words
translated into touch.

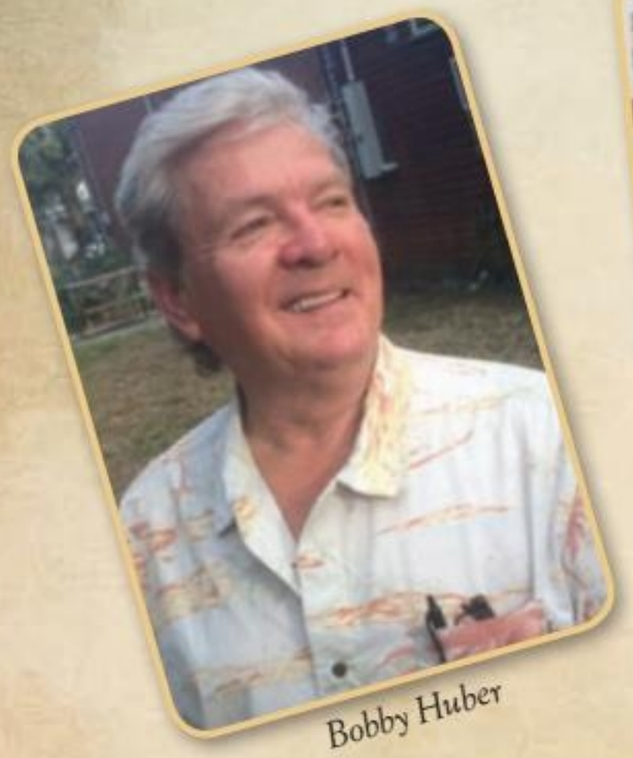
Fur. . . the grandest of all.
One is always dressed for any
occasion. Every occasion.
Tuxedo, calico, Bengal, leopard,
Persian. Fur is what the world
would wear if it could.

– *Ruth Moose*

FAMILY CIRCUS

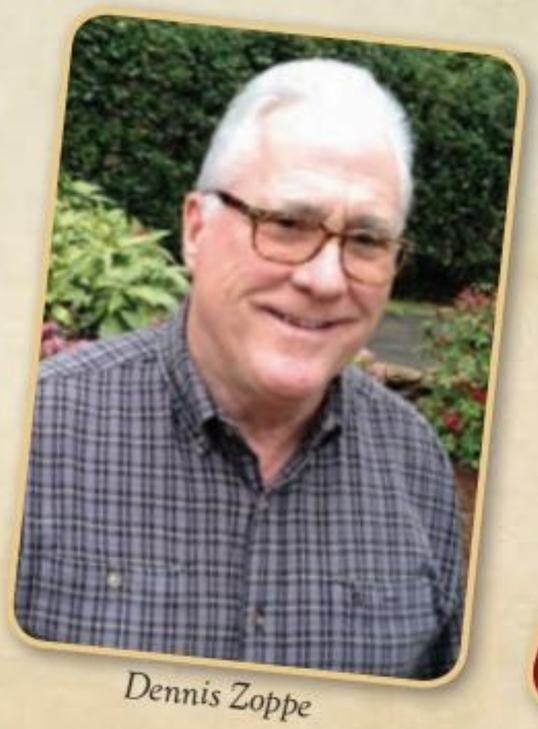
How several veteran performers ran away from the circus – and made Wilmington home sweet home

By Mark Holmberg



Bobby Huber

Fritzi Huber



Dennis Zoppe

Anita Zoppe

When it comes to towns where circus people come home to roost, the biggies are Florida's Sarasota and Gibsonton, the latter famed for being home to Monkey Boy, Lobster Girl, living yard elephants and a lowered post office counter for dwarves with mail.

But for those globe-trotting performers who run away from the circus to join a community, Wilmington is something of a sideshow destination.

Dennis Zoppe was a bareback equestrian performer, somersaulting atop cantering draft horses in towns all across this great land, when he and his fellow acrobat wife quit the family circus and moved here almost 35 years ago.

"My father said, 'I can't believe you're quitting after nine generations,'" recalled Zoppe, whose family's act traces back to Italy and will perform here during the Azalea Festival as "Cirque Ma'Ceo."

Above clockwise: Babette Brumbach, known as Tyana, the World's Strongest Woman with her elephant that she lifted in her act. Fritzi and Bobby Huber as children. A newsclipping of Fritzi, Bobby and their parents. Fritzi and Bobby's parents. Fritzi and fellow performers. Below: The bus that was home for Bobby Huber in the early 1980's.

Above: Dennis and Anita Zoppe in costume and Anita performing aerials.

Well-known Wilmington artist and former aerial ballerina Fritzi Huber also slipped away from her family circus life to put down roots here.

"It's like California used to be," she recalled her brother telling her after she gave her last single trapeze performance almost 30 years ago.

That brother, Bobby Huber, is the one in that circus community who first came here in 1983, luring other circus kids who had grown up together and wanted a new way of life.

"I told my wife, 'I'm done . . . I'm running away from the circus,'" Bobby Huber recalled.

Right before he quit, he was producing a 50-week-a-year circus that galloped 40,000 miles annually in four tractor-trailers and a 40-foot bus — a circus he rigged himself with his large, broad-knuckled hands that almost belong in a sideshow.

"I get these from my grandmother," he replied when asked about those rope-hardened mitts that terrified childhood wrestling opponents. "She was a strong woman in the circus," he explains. Babette Brumbach, known as Tyana, the World's Strongest Woman, lifted a small elephant in her act.

OK, perhaps you're reading this and are wondering, why did these circus kids land in Wilmington? It doesn't take a fortune teller to recall the other circus here in Wilmington: the movie industry.

At the very time Huber and his wife were driving away from the circus for good in the custom motorhome he had built, an old surfing buddy called and said he needed help rigging sets and building lighting towers for the movie *Firestarter*, being filmed here by Dino De Laurentiis. And if anyone knew rigging, it was Bobby Huber. After starting his circus career as an "under-stander" — part of the base of a human pyramid — he and those hands became rigging magic.

"I learned so much," he said. "I found I worked better under pressure."

One failure in a big-tent rope could spell disaster. If a 300-foot-long high-wire walked by someone like him and Fritzi's father (Fritz Huber, a Swiss-born tightrope artist who died of melanoma when Bobby was 11) or ridden by a stunt cyclist gave way, it could easily mean a very public death. Much was wof the rigging transitions were quickly done in the dark between acts. Animal cages and gates all had to be perfectly timed and certain to open or close.

"There was a lot of sphincter lock," Huber, now 66, recalled. "All the performers trusted my rigging above and beyond." He became known for his signature from above that all was secure — a lowered golden drop line.

So he was a great fit in the movie biz. Thus began the long career of one of the best key grips in the movie business, a job that has taken him around the world.

Consider the similarities between circuses and films: lighting, staging, props, animals, illusion, stunts, action and acting — all coming together to stir emotions like awe and fear among viewers. But even more importantly, the circus breeds a powerful "the show must go on" spirit that is crucial for movie and television work, said Scott Hillman, a former trapeze artist lured to the studios here by Huber in 1983. In the circus, "you can't say, 'Sorry, I couldn't make it,'" Hillman said. "There are no excuses. You've got to come up with whatever it takes."

And Wilmington needed those skills and that spirit back then. It was fast becoming "Hollywood East," with vast sound stages and enormous special effects rigs and tanks that were encouraged by tax incentives, easy living, great scenery and plenty of elbow room. "When I got my third call" to rig a movie in Wilmington, Huber said, "I moved here."

Huber and his wife (now his ex) bought a place in Castle Hayne not far from the studios. "I brought in all the circus guys for riggers," Huber recalled.

And he brought his mom, Barbara "Betty" Schultz, who had ridden across the tightrope on her husband's shoulders while he lived and had become a wardrobe mistress.

Dennis Zoppe got the call from Bobby to help rig 1985's *Year of the Dragon* and instantly fell in love with Wilmington. (The sets of that movie cemented Wilmington's reputation for amazing sound stages.) "It's a great town to live in," Zoppe said. "A great place to have kids. You don't have to fight traffic like you do in L.A. or New York."

Wilmington would provide something that none of the nine generations of

Aerialist Fritzi Huber

Early photos of Anita Armandis (Zoppe) performing. Armandis family photo (Anita is lower left seated).

Zoppe circus performers had previously achieved: a college education for him and his wife's son, who is now a research scientist in Switzerland. And Wilmington would also bring peace of mind to his wife, Anita Amandis Zoppe. (They have since split.)

Anita is the daughter of one of the amazing Amandis brothers of Denmark, acrobats who performed on the *Ed Sullivan Show*, *Captain Kangaroo* and others. She was "top man" of a teeter-totter act — launched into the air from a see-saw and then somersaulting into a chair or onto another performer's shoulders.

In 1988, she and Dennis Zoppe had stopped their motorhome at a rest area en route to a performance in Indianapolis when they saw in a newspaper that her cousin, the famed trapeze artist Belinda Amandis, had died in a fall. It was a national story, one that instantly changed her life.

Her husband had already worked for the studios here. She quit the circus and moved here with him (bringing her miniature horses), initially living at the KOA campground. That's about the same time Fritzi Huber answered the call from her brother to move to Wilmington. She's an adventurer and artist who had left the circus at age 22 because, she admitted, "I wasn't serious enough about it." Here's a still-supple 67-year-old woman with a scar on her lip not from a circus fall, but from surfing and "finding out how big is too big."

She had a business in crowded Southern California teaching people how to surf-launch Hobie catamarans when she got the call from brother Bobby about the wonders of Wilmington. She came here to do her art and hand-make paper and fell in love. For the first time in her life, she put down roots.

"We were people of the American landscape," she said as she cut paper and mixed glue for her class at the DREAMS Center for Arts Education, an after-school nurturing arts program in the east end of the Brooklyn Arts District. She and Bobby had grown up traveling the land in their parents' Travel Lite trailer. She remembers seeing the entire country quietly pass in front of their young eyes.

Among her early memories are looking out of a bunkside vent when she was supposed to be asleep, watching her father roll her mother across the high wire in a wheelbarrow as the crowds cheered. She and Bobby would listen to the circus music and "know how long they would be gone so we could do whatever we could get away with."

Fritzi said she was 8 years old when she first visited another girl who wasn't in the circus or home-schooled in a trailer. "She had a pink room and a pink dresser," Huber recalled. "It was so strange. She had lived in the same room for eight years! For the first time, I realized I was different."

Her brother Bobby also soaked up the roving life of the circus, but he was thrilled by the wild side of it. "To me, it was the spice of life," he said.

And it was the heyday of the circus, well before animal rights groups succeeded in demonizing what was once a rather glamorous way of life. Shriner chapters all across the land would pay to host family circuses. Bobby Huber remembers driving down an endless gravel road to get to the town of Flin Flon in Manitoba, Canada. "There was absolutely nothing there. But somehow 1,000 people showed up."

Back then, circus performers were like rock stars, said former trapeze artist Scott Hillman. "When you're wearing tights and you're flying high above, girls really want to say hello," Hillman, now 63, recalled. "It was a very dynamic period. The world was a different place."

Anita Zoppe agrees. "It was a wonderful life," she said. "I'm glad I had it."

Many of these former circus people will be among those watching the Cirque Ma'Ceo April 7–9 performances during the Azalea Festival weekend.Not only is it in their blood, for some, it is family.

"It's like coming back to a home base," said Cirque Ma'Ceo promoter Alexa Zoppe, who is Dennis Zoppe's niece by marriage. They are trying to keep this generations-old tradition alive, she said. Except in name. "It's hard to keep the name 'circus' alive," she said.

Imagine! "A theatrical equestrian show illuminating a beautiful, seamless story with the contemporary blend of acrobatics, aerial, dance and equestrian arts woven together with a rich gypsy vibe," is how the Cirque Ma'Ceo (translation: Gift of God Circus) is billed.

Is there a chance any of Wilmington's former performers are going to join the act?

Dennis Zoppe, now 62, has doubts about cantering a horse, let alone somersaulting on top of one like he used to do with the greatest of ease. "Now I get dizzy turning over in bed," he said with a chuckle.

Fritzi Huber, who still has her trapeze up in the attic, said three herniated discs in her back could literally make her old act death-defying. "We will watch with great delight," she said, "and pride."

Mark Holmberg splits his time between Richmond, Virginia and the Port City, writing and roaming, believing there's room for good ol' printed words about believers and strays and adventurers.

CIRQUE MA'CEO
Cirque Ma'Ceo will perform as a part of the Azalea Festival, April 7–9, at 4:30 p.m. and 7:30 p.m. at Wilmington International Airport, 1740 Airport Blvd., Wilmington. Tickets: $18 children, $35–50 adult, $70 VIP Ringside packages. www.ncazaleafestival.org/event/cirque-maceo

Wagons East

How the Wells Fargo Championship picked Wilmington's Eagle Point

By Jim Moriarty

When the circus comes to town it brings a big tent, some high wire acts and a lot of attention. When the Wells Fargo Championship pitches up at Eagle Point Golf Club in May it will bring all three. At least that's the hope. Hosting a PGA Tour event is tough enough when you do it year-in and year-out. Doing it once, in a place that wasn't designed for it, and getting it right can present a daunting set of challenges. After all, who wants to come off looking like a seat-filler at the Oscars with a clip-on tie and an ill-fitting tux?

You could say the trip from Charlotte's Quail Hollow Golf Club to Wilmington's Eagle Point began in a golf cart on Friday, May 6, 2010. That was the day Johnny Harris, Quail Hollow's BDFL (benevolent dictator for life), was seen chauffeuring the PGA of America's chief championships officer, Kerry Haigh, around the course two days before Rory McIlroy would shoot 62 to win his first tournament in America. The event that burst onto the PGA Tour's schedule like a Mardi Gras float passing out perks to players like beads on Bourbon Street was calling itself simply the Quail Hollow Championship that year since, in the wake of the financial meltdown of '08-'09, banks sponsoring golf tournaments had taken to wearing paper bags over their logos.

"Would we have preferred that you not see Kerry out here? Probably yes," said Harris at the time. "He was here to get comfortable with what we do and how we do it and the size of our crowds. He just came by here to visit. That's basically what it was. To take a look at how we do things. We compared the things we do and the things they do. Just getting to know each other." They got to know each other well enough that by August the PGA of America had announced it would be taking its most prestigious championship to Quail Hollow in 2017.

What Harris didn't want to sign on for was hosting two tournaments in the same year. That didn't, however, mean the Wells Fargo Championship — the banks eventually got over their shyness — was destined for the North Carolina coast. In fact, it was just as possible it would cozy up to the Pacific, where Wells Fargo makes its home. "There was some discussion about California, Harding Park (in San Francisco). There was discussion about potentially doing something in Philadelphia because that was a good market for them. They talked about potentially Atlanta," says Harris. "In the end, I was very, very supportive of what I thought could be accomplished down at Eagle Point. We thought by virtue of going to eastern North Carolina we had a chance to really do something special for that area of the state. If you want me to plead guilty to being a big supporter of the state of North Carolina, I'm absolutely guilty."

Harris wasn't alone. Kendall Alley, Wells Fargo's regional president, was keen to keep the tournament in state as well. In the wake of the Great Recession, it was Alley, who once played wide receiver at Clemson University, who was as responsible as anyone for convincing Wells to continue its sponsorship of the tournament in Charlotte. With Wells Fargo agreeable to remaining in North Carolina, selecting Eagle Point as the venue would have been no more complicated than a couple of green jackets — Augusta National Golf Club members Harris and Bobby Long — clinking glasses under the sprawling oaks of Augusta's veranda. Long, who since the death of the Eagle Point's first president, Billy Armfield, has become to that club what Harris is to Quail Hollow, had already saved one PGA Tour tournament for North Carolina, spearheading the rescue of the Wyndham Championship in his hometown of Greensboro, a tour stop that has been in existence since 1938.

"We'd had a lot of adverse economic circumstances," says Long of Greensboro when its venerable tour stop, won eight times by Sam Snead, was on life support. "Here it was, one of the oldest events on tour, and it was going to go away. Let's try not to let that happen. I've seen firsthand the economics that occur when you do something that's broadcast around the world and is a success." The powerful troika of business scions, Harris, Alley and Long, made Wilmington's center of gravity as irresistible as a day at the beach.

"Johnny and I are old friends," says Long. "He called me and said we're thinking about this, what do you think? Our first thought was this is quite an undertaking, particularly for one year."

Ultimately, it presents an even bigger opportunity. "A lot of us have vacation homes in the area. We love it but have we done enough to give back?" asks Long. "This is a very rare thing for Wilmington to be able to bring eyeballs from 210 countries through CBS and show Wilmington as a great place."

Though these days you'd have to travel all the way south to Hilton Head to find something comparable to the PGA Tour playing right across the Intracoastal from a posh barrier island, it's not the first time the big show has been to the beach. The Azalea Open (or something sporting a similar

name) was played in Wilmington in 1946 and from 1949-71 at the Cape Fear Country Club. Arnold Palmer won it in 1957 and nearly succeeded in defending the title, losing in a Monday playoff the following year after calling a penalty on himself during the last round — he saw his ball move on the 14th green.

Most often played the week before the Masters, the best-known story to come out of the Azalea Open probably belongs to Jack Nicklaus. In 1959 Nicklaus, a 19-year-old amateur, requested a spot in the Azalea Open and was granted an exemption. When he showed up, however, he was informed the offer had been made in error and he'd have to qualify, which he did. He shot 73-74 the first two rounds in horrible weather and was tied for 14th place, six shots behind. Whether it was nothing more than the lousy conditions (or perhaps he was still a little miffed at being forced to qualify after being promised a spot), Nicklaus withdrew from the tournament and headed to Augusta to prepare for his first Masters.

"On Monday, when the tour brass arrived at Augusta National from Wilmington for the Masters, the very first thing they did was come find little old Jackie Nicklaus," writes Nicklaus in his book *My Story*. The young Nicklaus did his best to explain himself. The tour officials were having none of it. One pointed out that, if he'd shot 70-70 on the weekend, he would have won the tournament. Win, lose or draw, taking a walk wasn't acceptable behavior in a professional event. The more Nicklaus thought about it, the worse he felt: "...it ended up teaching me a lesson that has lasted my entire career — which is that, when you enter a golf tournament, you stay in that golf tournament to its beautiful or bitter end, unless you become physically incapacitated to the point of not being able either to walk or to swing a golf club. Hopefully, my addiction to that philosophy over the intervening years has made up a little for my youthful stupidity."

Once the decision was made for the tour to return to Wilmington after a hiatus approaching half a century, Eagle Point, like the proverbial dog that chases the car and catches it, set about the task of devouring the steel-belted radial that is the Wells Fargo Championship. Inevitably, one of the first questions is, how will the course hold up when some of the best players in the world have a go at it? The answer, like most relationships — even short-term ones — is complicated.

Founded in 2000 and designed by Tom Fazio as a pure golf club, as opposed to a tournament venue, Eagle Point will only be as vexing as the stakeholders want it to be. There is a balance between a good show and a good test. Any golf course can be set up to be virtually impossible. The greens can be hard as manhole covers, the rough high as pampas grass, rendering birdies as rare as piping plovers. And, no proud membership wants to see their course reduced to something resembling Blackbeard's Lagoon Golf and Putt Putt by the best players on the planet wielding high tech equipment that has made length as relevant as a Blackberry. The goal will be somewhere down the middle, not too hot, not too cold. If rains soften the course, they'll kill it like they do Oakmont CC or Augusta National GC or Pinehurst No. 2 or anywhere else. If the wind blows, as it often does in early May, and the fairways and greens are firm and fast, Eagle Point is long enough and cagey enough to be test enough.

"We've seen players go to some of the hardest golf courses in the world and shoot scores that are amazing. It depends on weather conditions, like everything," says Fazio. "Scoring never really bothers me. No matter what the score, I think the reaction of the players is going to be fabulous. I'm excited about the people that have never been there. Eagle Point is distinctive, almost an old classic. It has the compact feel of a golf club."

Billy Anderson, Eagle Point's director of operations, is a western Pennsylvania guy who knows a bit about the Oakmonts of the world, having once worked at the one in suburban Pittsburgh that's hosted nine U.S. Opens. "If we don't get any rain and it's hard and fast, I think it'll be 10-15 under par," says Anderson. "If it rains a little bit and the wind doesn't blow, it will probably be more. And that's fine."

Dillard Pruitt, another Clemson alum and a former tour player himself, is a PGA Tour rules official and the advance man for Eagle Point. "Until we play on it, you don't know," says Pruitt. "We brought in a few fairways, just a little bit. Not drastic. It's going to be interesting to see how they do play it. There are going to be some challenges there, but everything is going to work out great. It's going to be fresh. It's new."

Ah, the challenges. They've had a few. There is, however, no use comparing the physical plants of Quail Hollow and Eagle Point. "Many of the things that happened (at Quail Hollow) were part of the long range plan," says Fazio. "It was like a 15-year process to renovate it. Part of that recently has been for additional gallery space. It's a tournament support facility. There are things like central staging areas for television. Underground cables. Gallery positions. Internal on-site places for evacuation control. You wouldn't do that on any facility where you were only going to have an occasional tour event."

While ticket sales will be capped at 25,000 per day, getting that many people in and out of Eagle Point won't be as easy as using a Star Trek transporter. There will be central spectator parking lots well off property, mostly on Route 17 North. The buses will come down Porter's Neck Road to a special entrance created on the fourth hole of Eagle Point's short course. There will undoubtedly be a few snafus along the way and a bit of dislocation for the people who live off Porter's Neck Road, but it's a transportation system not dissimilar to most tour events, including the one at Quail Hollow.

From the moment Long agreed to take on Wells Fargo, work commenced on the course. All the bunkers were redone. Five new back tees were constructed. Some of the native areas were grassed in. They hired Marsh Benson, the retired former superintendent at Augusta National, as a consultant. "From an agronomic standpoint, we're not doing anything different than we do every year, other than we're overseeded this year," says Eagle Point superintendent Craig Walsh. Because the first week in May would normally be right on the edge of when the Bermuda grass fairways pop, they didn't want to run any risk of the turf being held back by an unusually cold spring. "We didn't want to have that worry," says Walsh. "We wanted to provide a first-class playing surface and overseeding will do that."

In the end, what the club earns from the tournament — its fee and percentages of merchandise, concessions, etc. — will likely fall short of the expenses it's already incurred. "The economics for the club are less than attractive," says Long with a bit of a smile. "It's a huge amount of work. We've tried to make the golf course as good as we possibly can so that it will reflect well for Wilmington. It's a way of giving back."

And, while the economic impact for the golf club may not be eye-popping, it could be for the city. "The numbers from the PGA Tour and from Wells is that there is $40 to $50 million economic impact over three years. And all the charitable dollars, I think that's between $4 and $5 million, stays in the community, which is wonderful," says Anderson. "Hopefully, we'll get five or six days of good weather. We'll make 25,000 people happy and get a good champion. We want 19 guys to fight it out the last nine holes on TV. It's great theater."

And then spread the word.

Jim Moriarty spent 35 years following golfers for Golf Digest *and* Golf World *and survived.*

Glamour in the Garden

Hollywood transplants create an oasis of relaxation artfully tucked behind a classic downtown Colonial Revival

By William Irvine • Photographs by Mark Steelman

One of the most beautiful neighborhoods in Wilmington can be found in the blocks immediately surrounding the Mansion District, that stately procession of houses lining Market Street in the high teens. Behind the former mansions of the Kenan sisters are the elegant houses of turn-of-the-century Wilmington merchants and bankers in a variety of sizes, ranging from the shingle style to robber baron Baroque.

And this is the neighborhood where Richard and Mia Hankins found their dream house, a prewar Colonial Revival property that would not look out of place in Buckhead or on a Hollywood backlot as a stand-in for an antebellum plantation house. But it's also a house with a secret — behind the stately Colonial house is a garden straight out of Beverly Hills or Bel Air, an oasis of glamour in plain sight (if you can get behind the locked gate leading out back). And now you are invited to do so: The Hankins garden will be on view from April 7 – 9 as part of the Cape Fear Garden Club Azalea Garden Tour.

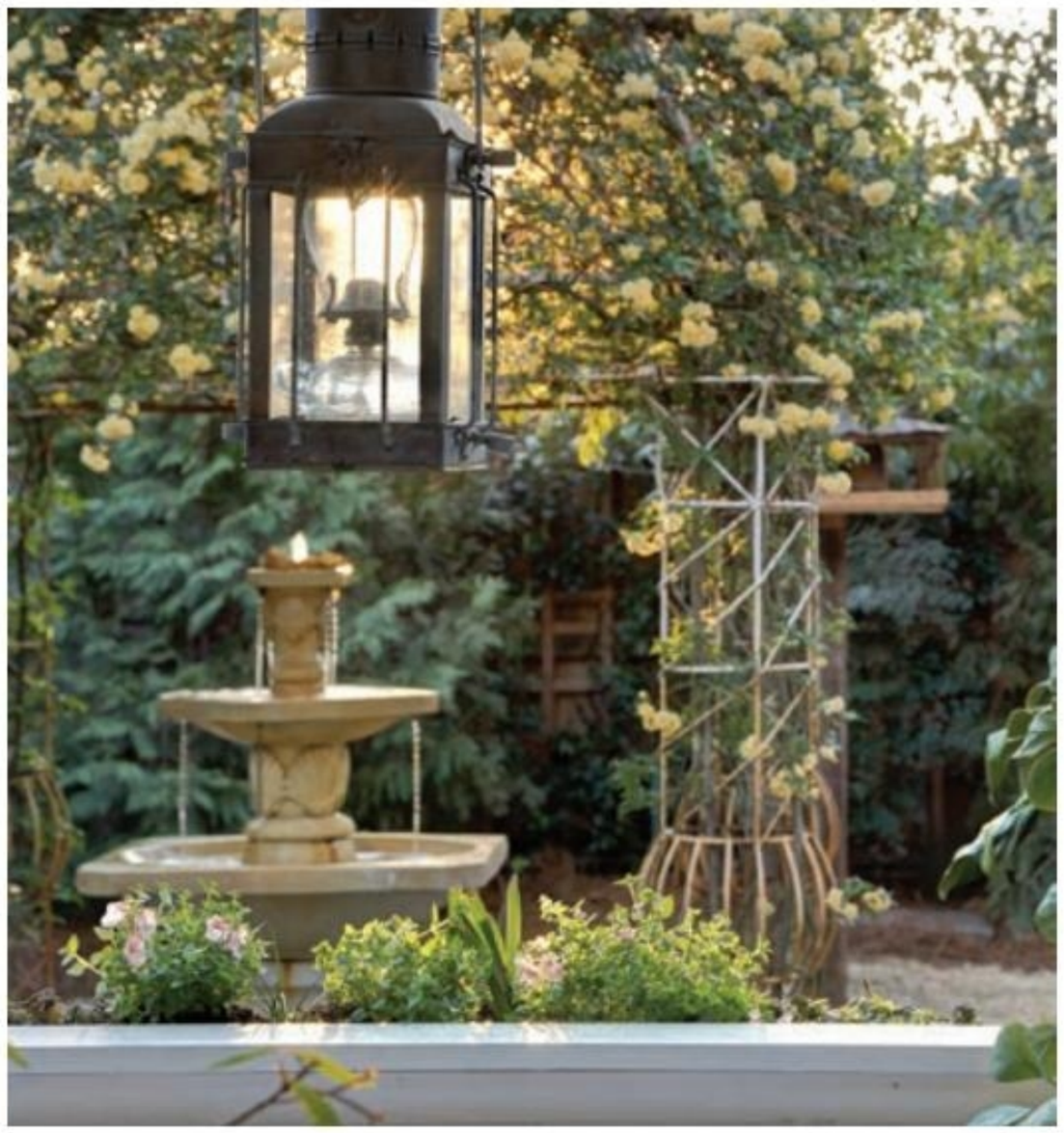
Richard Hankins is no stranger to Hollywood. An Emmy Award-winning production and stage designer, he worked for many years in theater companies and television on the hit series *NYPD Blue*. The couple met in Los Angeles, where Mia was working as a producer on an Elmore Leonard film. A mutual friend introduced them: "The first time we talked on the phone, the conversation went on for five hours," Mia says. Soon they were an item. But North Carolina beckoned, and Mia, a Raleigh native, wanted to come back home and started to look for houses in Wilmington. "We found the house online. Richard was still in L.A. and the house was vacant, so I went with the real estate agent to look at it," she says. But there was an unexpected surprise: "Being an architect's daughter I could read a blueprint, and I couldn't find the basement. We discovered a secret door behind a bookcase, went down the stairs, and we saw . . . big fans and grow-lights!! The shelves were empty, but we found one cannabis leaf on the floor, the previous owner's calling card, I guess." But Mia was sold. She and Richard bought the house in March 2010 and were married on the front steps two months later.

Thankfully, the house's first owners, the Edwards family (who owned a prosperous Wilmington nursery), were more interested in legal plants, as is evidenced in the front garden, where a bushy 75-year-old plum-pine hedge flanks the curved walk leading up to the house. "When we moved here it was so tall it was like walking through a green tunnel," Mia says. She points out a new arrival, a hybrid gardenia and rhododendron that is about to burst into bloom. "I'm crazy in love with it," she says with a laugh. And there are other surprises. A life-size metal giraffe by renowned local artist Michael Van Hout peeks out from behind old-growth azaleas. And there is a large Japanese maple tree. "I bonsai my maple," she says. "It can be *very* temperamental." A flowering plum tree was moved closer to it to provide shade.

Originally a separate lot, the left side of the property was owned by a sister of the Edwards family, and was eventually combined to form the front yard of the almost-acre property. And many of the original plantings remain: giant old-growth camellias and azaleas. "Salmon-red, a very unusual color," Mia says. "It's like our own little ecosystem over here." And she bravely shepherded along some of the existing roses. "These were spindly and pathetic when we moved in, but I educated myself about caring for them. These are old English climbing roses, and I love them."

On the white wooden gate to the rear of the property hangs a

WILMINGTONIAN THEATER



sign: THEATRE NOW OPEN, DAILY SHOWINGS AT DUSK. So you are fully prepared when you open the door to the back garden and see an outdoor, film industry-standard movie screen, a perfect spot for guests who come in the summer for a swim and to watch revival films (it's strictly bring-your-own-chair). The centerpiece of the back garden is a blue-tiled Moroccan-style swimming pool surrounded by towering sabal palms, a good 20 feet in height. The general atmosphere makes you feel as if you are waiting for a poolside cocktail at, say, the Beverly Hills Hotel. In addition to the palms are a collection of potted plants in colorful terra-cotta urns as well as 25-year-old azaleas. The Hankinses added a pergola to cover the red brick terrace, which has become a perfect spot for outdoor dining in the summer. And there are Richard's masterful architectural birdhouses (a natural fit for a former production designer): everything from a tobacco barn to a Dorothy Gale-worthy Kansas farmhouse to a perfectly rendered Maine lobster shack, complete with dock.

This fantasy was all created, like a stage-set, from scratch: "It was a total jungle back here when we moved in. . . a trash heap with nothing but tiny saplings scattered throughout the yard," Mia says. She leads me over to the spacious bed/swing in the shade overlooking the pool: "I call this my diva swing. It's very therapeutic. Richard built it all by himself for our sixth anniversary." The structure is fully fitted as a functioning room with electricity, a fan and built-in lighting. "All I need is a kitchen in here and I will be all set!" she says. The side garden, which is framed by Richard's nearby studio and workshop, features an idyllic metal gazebo cascading with yellow Lady Banks roses, all surrounding a stone fountain. Elegant tree-size white camellias provide cooling afternoon shade.

Of course all this beauty requires some assistance, and Mia has worked for the last few years with her trusted helpers Chris and Armando, of Carolina Coastal Landscaping. "It has been a lot of work," she says. "But I fell in love with the garden and its potential. I knew I would create a place so pleasant that I would never want to leave." Mission accomplished.

William Irvine is a former senior editor of House Beautiful *magazine. He is also a palindromist and the proprietor of Schermerhorn Books & Art, a virtual bookshop specializing in arts and design. A late-onset Southerner, he lives in the historic district of Wilmington.*

The 64th annual Cape Fear Garden Club Azalea Garden Tour will be held this year from April 7 – 9, 10 a.m. – 6 p.m. Ticket holders can tour 12 gardens (10 private and the public gardens of Airlie and the Bellamy Mansion). Founded in 1925, the Cape Fear Garden Club is the oldest and largest garden club in North Carolina and a longtime steward of the beautification of Wilmington. Proceeds from the Azalea Garden Tour go to scholarships and conservation efforts, most notably the Battery Island wildlife sanctuary, which is owned and managed by the National Audubon Society and supports North Carolina's largest colony of wading birds. Info: Tickets are $25. To purchase garden tour tickets, visit www.capefeargardenclub.org.

Calling Home

They picked a historic house – or did it pick them?

By Isabel Zermani · Photographs by Rick Ricozzi

"Everybody comes here by accident," says Sydney Penny, actress and former Azalea Festival Queen who was first bewitched by our town in 1997, when she came to film a movie titled – of all things – *Enchanted*. Chance encounters have brought Wilmington many of its finest residents, some who leave only to be drawn back, others who visit once and can't bear to go. Her husband, Robert Powers, agrees: "It's a strange vortex."

"*Xanadu! Brigadoon!*" chimes Penny.

Powers recalls the logic of why the couple chose to relocate here 12 years ago: "There's no other coastal city that has the infrastructure and the beach." But he was charmed on the first visit, Penny reminds him: "You said, 'Keep your eye on Wilmington.'"

Perhaps 'twas the same subtle powers that drew the couple to their historic Queen Anne home on Fifth Avenue in the sphere of Saint Mary's Basilica and the Tileston Center. Penny recalls seeing the photos while in L.A. when Powers was scouting homes. "I kept seeing this house . . . I couldn't get past this house," remembers Penny. The fireplace in the kitchen, the stained glass windows, the breathtaking twin stair that leads up to a landing. "I always imagined someone getting married there," she says. "Maybe it calls to you. It chooses you."

The house was built in 1890 by Dr. James H. Durham, a dentist who prac-

ticed at 114 Princess St. The *Wilmington Messenger* printed a happy notice of the move-in day on August 6. A society column from 1905 praises the family and mentions a "dance and bowling party" for his daughter, Miss Nellie, hosted at Lumina on Wrightsville Beach.

The Historic Wilmington Foundation plaque reads: "Durham-Davis House," also honoring Charles B. Davis, a clerk for the Atlantic Coastline Railroad. Davis acquired the house in 1923 after a brief possession by William McEachern (who appeared in last month's "Story of a House" as the banana importer who kept pet monkeys). The Davis family owned the home until 1966. It did not lack for visitors.

"It became a boarding house," says Powers, standing in the foyer, where gleaming heart pine floors and skirting show no signs of this chapter of heavy use. Nail holes in the 10-foot pocket doors were found where plates with the room numbers had been tacked on. It's tough to imagine now, post-preservation award, but the city directory lists the names of salesman, seamen and seamstresses, clerks from the Great A&P Tea Co. and the Grand Five Ten and Twenty-five Cent Store who all passed through this great and grand Victorian home.

And some return to visit their memories.

"A couple of guys — " starts Powers.

" — They were brothers — " says Penny.

" — used to come every year," continues Powers. "They were the Davis children. They grew up here." They slept in bunk beds in the kitchen. Their laundry crisscrossed overhead from the second floor to the carriage house. Out back, a garage built from an old carriage house photograph gained the approval of HWF, but more so, the neighborhood matriarch, Mrs. Dolly Pearson.

Another man, who had grown up next door and then, as a newlywed, rented a room in the house, returned just to touch the past. Often there's a Peter Pan quality to the drop-ins. "My favorite story about the boys who come to visit — I call them *boys* because of the way their faces change when they see the house — is about the pecans," says Penny. Huge pecan trees still tower in the backyard. Apparently, Mrs. Davis told one boy he could help himself to enough pecans to fill his pockets only. The enterprising lad promptly cut holes in them, cinched up his knickers at the knees and proceeded to stuff his pant legs to the shape of Elizabethan breeches.

Like many visitors from the old days, they tend to come to the side door. Wrap-around porches, typical of a Queen Anne, arrive at a separate door for family (or, at times, an office).

On especially hot days, the triple hung windows would have been opened and used as throughways. Heating and cooling has been on the mind of every homeowner, as evidenced by the nine coal fireplaces and 1915 copper thermostat — rigged to a boiler in the basement — that controlled the temperature, releasing steam from a valve once the copper disc was sated. Guests often mistake this for a dinner gong, but it was once the height of technology.

Downstairs the bath reflects its own golden age. "All the rage of the '90s . . . the 1890s, that is!" vamps Powers. A classic claw-foot soaking tub on black and white hexagon tile is elevated by the room's Asian-inspired elements. Japanese prints influenced the major painters and graphic artists of the period, and it

would have felt — as it does in this context — exciting and alluring.

True to the period, with a twist, Penny and Powers committed to a Victorian palate. The wallpaper, by Bradbury & Bradbury, reflects motifs like a decorative palm, but in a metallic gold. The front parlor paper is a period reproduction print that recalls the preserved-by-a-miracle pink tile in the ornate fireplace. One can admire the spindle work from matching red velvet club chairs. "It has the original overmantel," says Penny gleefully, a very commonly lost crowning glory. Though not original, the majolica chandelier oil lamp is period and lit "on special occasions." A séance, perhaps?

The drama is not lost on Penny, perhaps most famous for her role as Julia Santos on *All My Children*. A child star of such films as Clint Eastwood's *Pale Rider*, the actress reached "a funny point in my career: an awkward age, not a lot of roles," when first asked to audition for a soap opera. "I never thought they'd hire me! They did." NBC's *Santa Barbara* lasted one season — though it earned her an Emmy nomination — but it introduced her to Powers, who was working in production and changed the direction of her career. "Never say never," says Penny, who extols the camaraderie of some the hardest working actors in the biz.

A portrait of Powers' great aunt, the actress Helen Wagner, hangs above the piano. Daytime royalty, she played Nancy Hughes on *As the World Turns* for 50 years.

Nods to the classic age of Hollywood also abound. Not only do they display original graphic art by Rea Irvin (first art director of *The New Yorker)*, and show poster originals, but Powers' own paintings draw inspiration from the early days of entertainment. "I don't let him sell them," Penny says of Powers' hyper-detailed watercolors. One scene shows a wrestler and a barker with a megaphone drumming up an audience outside the Fox Theatre in Santa Ana. Each character is imbued with inner life, and Penny and Powers improvise their voices. Another turn-of-the-century-style watercolor of Powers' is a beach scene from Newport Beach in 1918.

His recent paintings are oils, but similar in subject: people and water. "Rob's from Laguna Beach," says Penny. "He, like Chasen (their son), is a water guy." The new paintings are reminiscent of David Hockney's pool series, but with more joy. The figures are leaping, suspended in reverie.

"I'm an actress," explains Penny. "I'm an interpretive artist. Give me parts, I'll build you something. What he does terrifies me. A blank canvas."

"It's the exact same thing," Powers insists. "I see pictures, you see words." Penny is not convinced. Their banter is as charming and watchable as a vaudeville duo.

Powers' painterly sensibility pervades the home inside and out. The exterior gray-greens lend an understated mystery to the gingerbreading and showcase

the backlit stained glass. Pops of color on the porch furnishings can change to match the season, as does the landscape. A bountiful border of hostas soaks up the shade, while the Southern sun feeds a stunning display of old growth azaleas. A single palm stands out front.

Botanical and Audubon prints carry nature indoors, as do built-in bookshelves in the back parlor painted a strong green — as if an answer to the dark rose color and ballooning silk drapes of the feminine front parlor. "Like Maxim's in Paris," says Penny. The languid longhaired cats, Percy and Mr. Darcy, are straight out of central casting. A French blue dining room displays impressionist paintings and a stately table with inlays, one of the few pieces they moved from California, where they'd restored both a 1923 Prairie and 1933 Spanish-style home.

Upstairs the bedrooms take on neutral tones, clay yellow, linen white and slate. Off the master is a cozy sitting room with a Victorian daybed overlooking the garden. "This is my treehouse view," says Penny. "I love the feeling of being perched."

During their initial renovation, they doubled the size of the kitchen and added a screened-in dining porch, but preserved the ornamental hearth that called to them. Red custom cabinetry, a copper sink, a limestone island, and other chef's kitchen elements make one salivate — or could that be the ribs smoking?

Not only do Penny and Powers love to cook, Powers trained at the Cordon Bleu in Paris and owns his own line of barbecue sauce, Curly's Q. Out back is a wood-burning pizza oven and barbecue, where the couple serve up homemade pizzas by the dozen for large parties.

Recently, they took on a new food endeavor: buying the beloved Jester's Cafe just a few blocks over on Castle Street. "Our home down the road for 12 years," says Penny. "We thought if Jamie (the previous owner) really wants to move on, we better buy it so it stays." Powers, who has been cooking there for some time, was a natural inheritor (after all, who do you think "Rob's Club" on Jester's menu was named for?). The couple wants to assure devoted diners they don't intend on changing Jester's, just adding a few specials and "freshening" the look.

Since being crowned Azalea Queen in 1999, Penny has played many roles (on and off screen) in our enchanted city, but says she feels like "I'm shifting gears." A lifetime in showbiz isn't likely to fade, but what gets Penny most excited now is off-camera. Next year she will chair the Azalea Garden Tour, a first for a queen. Standing in her garden surrounded by the blooms she once reigned over, Penny delights in saying, "I'm being a mom, being a wife, being a business owner. I'm not playing one on TV."

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April

By Ash Alder

Every spring is the only spring
– a perpetual astonishment.
–Ellis Peters

April Love Song

If ever there were a more delicious poem than April, perhaps only the bluebird would know it. Or the nectar-drunk duskywing. Or the glossy black rat snake, so entranced by the color of the robin's egg that he swallows the pastel vessel whole.

April is here. Sow the beets and the broccoli. Plant the beans and the cukes. Harvest the tender green shoots of asparagus.

Welcome the rain. Let it kiss you, mused Harlem jazz poet Langston Hughes. Listen to its "sleep-song" on your roof at night.

Earth Day falls on Saturday, April 22. This month, gift the Earth a poem of love. Plant a tree in the garden. Buy local produce. Organize a community cleanup. And when the Earth sings, listen.

Let the rain kiss you.
Let the rain beat upon your head with silver liquid drops.
Let the rain sing you a lullaby.

The rain makes still pools on the sidewalk.
The rain makes running pools in the gutter.
The rain plays a little sleep-song on our roof at night –
And I love the rain.

– Langston Hughes, "April Rain Song"

Must-See Moon

According to *National Geographic*, one of the "Top 7 Must-See Sky Events for 2017" will occur on Monday, April 10. On this dreamy spring night, just moments after sunset, Jupiter and the near-full Pink Moon will rise together in the eastern sky like forbidden lovers.

The *Old Farmer's Almanac* speculates that a full moon in April brings frost. While it's not actually pink, Algonquin tribes likely named this month's full moon for the wild ground phlox that blooms with the arrival of spring. Also called the Sprouting Grass, Fish and Egg Moon, if the full Pink Moon rises pale on April 11, bet your folklore-loving bippy it will rain.

A Few Delicious Words

Henry James once mused that "summer afternoon" were perhaps the "two most beautiful words in the English language."

"Easter brunch" make a lovely pair.

Ditto "asparagus frittata."

So if you find yourself playing host on Sunday, April 16, and life gives you fresh asparagus spears, steam until tender then add them to your favorite egg dish.

The Medicine Chest

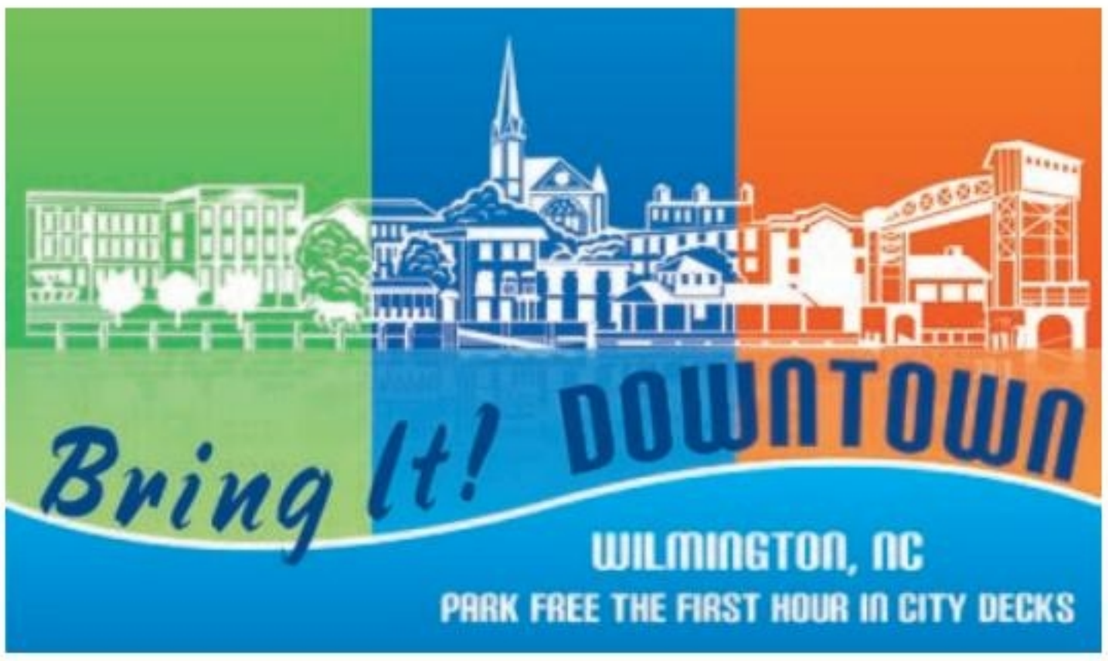
Want to try your hand at an herb garden? Start now. Since most herbs thrive in full or filtered sun, carve out a cozy outdoor space with optimal light and drainage. Then, allow yourself to dream. Conjure up visions of lush beds with tidy labels, dark opal basil tangled with pineapple sage, aromatic bundles of herbs hanging upside down inside the coolest rooms of the house. Whether it's medieval apothecary or fresh pesto that you're craving, April is here to help make manifest your fantasy.

Here's what to plant this month. Cue "Scarborough Fair" for reference.

Parsley – Rich in cancer-fighting compounds.
Sage – Digestive aid.
Rosemary – Improves memory.
Thyme – Antiseptic and anti-fungal properties.

April Flowers

Daisy and sweet pea are this month's birth flowers. The first is a symbol of innocence and purity, while the latter represents blissful pleasure. If you wish to brighten someone's day, a simple bouquet of fern and daisies will speak volumes. A gift of fragrant sweet pea, on the other hand, is best reserved for a sweet goodbye.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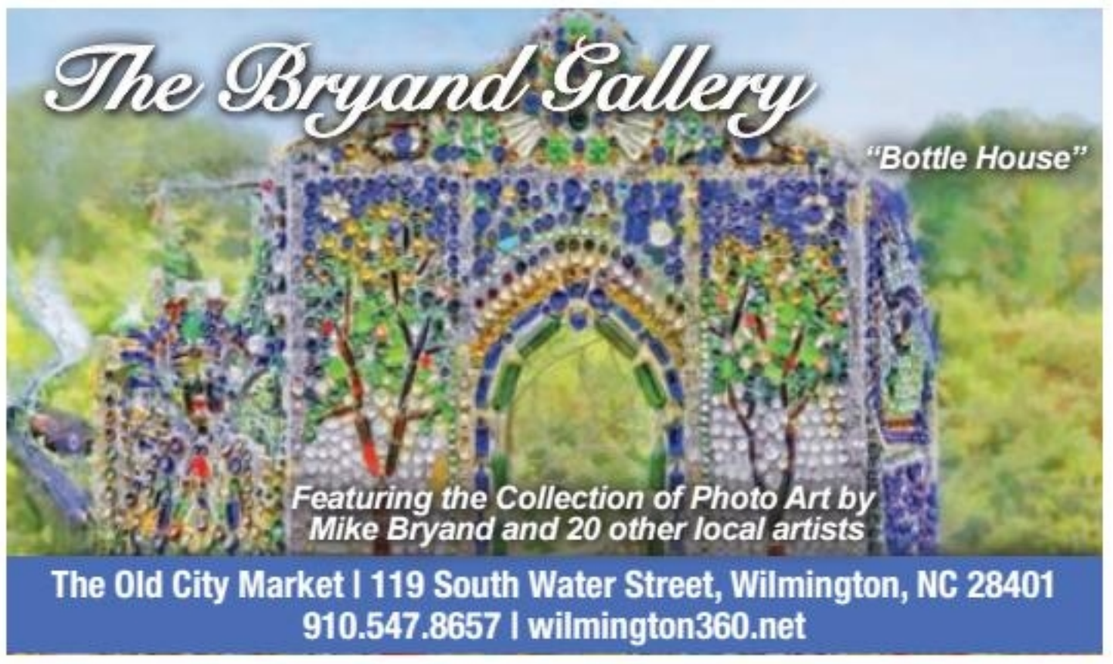
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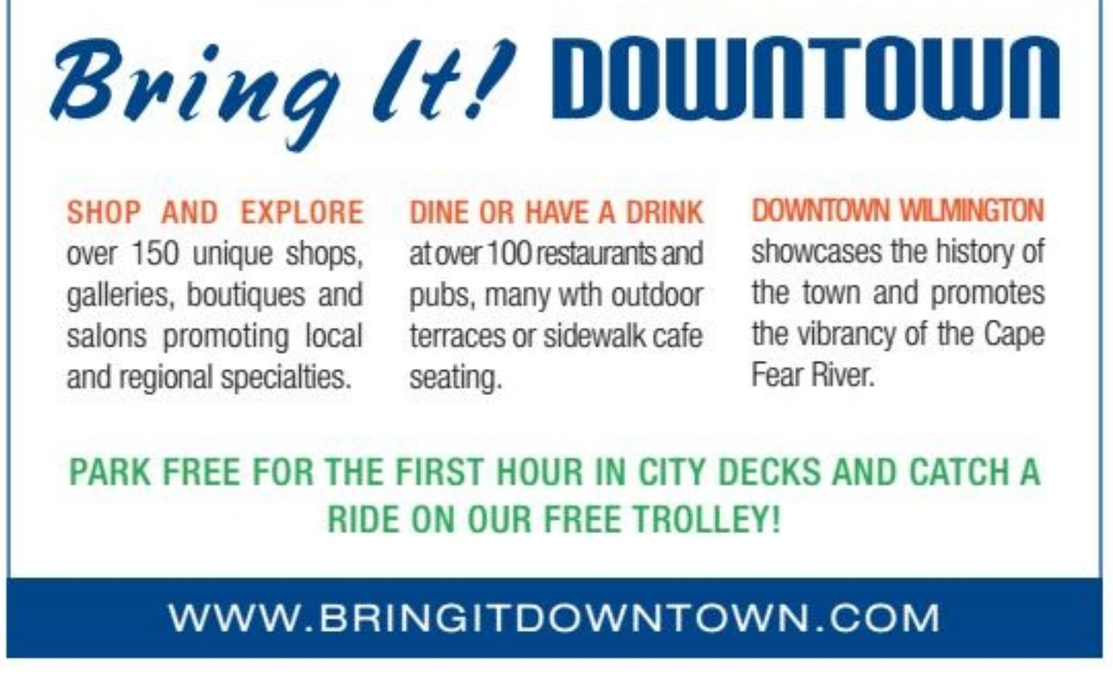
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Arts Calendar

The Temptations in Concert

4/5

Carolina Cup

4/19-23

Paws4People

4/23

4/1 Azalea 10K/5K

8 a.m. 10K, 5K and one-mile race hosted by the Cape Fear Volunteer Center. Kids, dogs and costumes are welcome. Admission: $35–40. Proceeds benefit the Big Buddy Program. Try Sports, 925 Town Center Drive, Wilmington. Info: www.ncazaleafestival.org.

4/1 CFCC Boat Show

9:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. Celebrate the craft of boat building with exhibits, boat building demonstrations, awards, a knot-tying challenge, food trucks and vendor booths. Proceeds provide scholarship funding for students in CFCC's boat building programs. CFCC Campus, Water St., Wilmington. Info: (910) 362-7151 or cfcc.edu/boatshow.

4/1 Cape Fear Craft & Cuisine

6–9 p.m. Cape Fear Craft Beer Alliance presents a beer and food pairing event including dishes and beers from some of the area's best restaurants and breweries. Admission: $65. Airlie Gardens, 300 Airlie Road, Wilmington. Info: (910) 798-7700 or www.airliegardens.org.

4/1 & 2 Coastal Carolina Trainfest

10 a.m. – 5 p.m. (Saturday); 10 a.m. – 4 p.m. (Sunday). Train expo featuring examples of model railroads from six different clubs including more than fifteen operating layouts, clinics, demos and vendors. Admission: $10. Coastline Conference Center, 501 Nutt St., Wilmington. Info: www.coastalcarolinatrainfest.org.

4/1 Native Plant Lecture and Sale

9:15 a.m. – 12:30 p.m . Cape Fear Audubon Society President Charley Winterbauer presents a free program about the native trees and plants of southeastern NC and how they benefit our local birds and other wildlife. Hanover Center, 3501 Oleander Drive, Wilmington. Info: (910) 343-6001 or www.wildbirdgardeninc.com

4/1 & 2 Herb & Garden Fair

9 a.m. – 4 p.m. (Saturday); 10 a.m. – 4 p.m. (Sunday). Plant and garden fair featuring a variety of plants, herbs, garden art, herbal products and artisan crafts for sale as well as classes, activities and exhibits on gardening, local vendors and food trucks. Admission: $3–5. Poplar Grove Plantation, 10200 US Highway 17 North, Wilmington. Info: (910) 686-9518 or www.poplargrove.org.

4/1 & 2 Spring Choral Concert

Time TBD. The SeaNotes Choral Society (a 150-member community chorus) performs their spring concert "Everything's Coming Up Roses" directed by Bob Marks. Admission: Free. Odell Williamson Auditorium, BCC, 50 College Road NE, Bolivia. Info: www.sea-notes.com.

4/1–9 Musical Theatre

7:30 p.m. (Thursday – Saturday); 3 p.m. (Sunday). Based on the real-life memoirs of burlesque mega-star, Gypsy Rose Lee, *Gypsy* tells the story of the mother behind the curtain, Mama Rose. Rose pushes her two daughters to pave the way to stardom on vaudeville's legendary circuit. Admission: $15–30. Thalian Hall, 310 Chestnut St., Wilmington. Info: (910) 632-2285 or www.thalian.org.

4/1 & 15 Story Hour

11 a.m. – 12 p.m. An interactive event for kids ages 3 to 6. The morning opens with a picture book and ends with a project or activity, and includes time to play, learn, and laugh. Each child should bring a participating adult. Admission: Free. Main Library, 201 Chestnut St., Wilmington. Info: (910) 798-6303 or www.nhclibrary.org.

4/2 Metropolitan Opera

1 – 5:30 p.m. The Osher Lifelong Learning Institute presents *Idomeneo.* James Levine conducts this rare Met revival of Mozart's opera set in the aftermath of the Trojan War. Admission: $20–24. Lumina Theater, UNCW, 601 South College Road, Wilmington. Info: (910) 962-3195 or www.uncw.edu.

4/3 Games Day & Tennis Mixer

11:30 a.m. Games day featuring duplicate bridge, party bridge, mahjong, Mexican train, poker, and hand & foot. Lunch is optional. Cocktails and silent auction to follow. Admission: $30; $16.50/lunch. Proceeds benefit the Good Shepherd Center. Country Club of Landfall, 1550 Landfall Drive, Wilmington. Info: (910) 763-4424 or www.goodshepherdwilmington.org.

4/3 National Theatre

1 – 5 p.m. The Osher Lifelong Learning Institute presents *Hedda Gabler,* a modern production of Ibsen's masterpiece about a newlywed trapped in a marriage that has quickly gone south. Admission: $6–20. Kenan Auditorium, UNCW, 515 Wagoner Drive, Wilmington. Info: (910) 962-3500 or www.uncw.edu/olli/nationaltheatre.html.

4/4 Bird Hike

9–10:30 a.m. Join park staff for a leisurely bird-watching stroll around Halyburton Park the first Tuesday of the month. Search for migrants, winter residents and year-round bird species. Admission: Free. Halyburton Park, 4099 South Seventeenth St., Wilmington. Info: (910) 341-0075 or www.halyburtonpark.com.

4/5 The Temptations in Concert

8 p.m. The NC Azalea Festival presents The Temptations featuring Dennis Edwards live in concert. Admission: $45. Kenan Auditorium, UNCW, 601 South College Road, Wilmington. Info: www.ncazaleafestival.org.

4/5 Azalea Queen's Coronation

3 p.m. Official crowning of the NC Azalea Festival queen plus meet and greet with festival celebrity guests, city officials, board members and Cape Fear Garden Club Azalea Belles. Admission: Free. Port City Marina, 10 Harnett St., Wilmington. Info: (910) 794-4650 or www.ncazaleafestival.org.

4/6 Celebrity Reception

11:30 a.m. Reception held for sponsors of the Azalea Festival featuring a chance to meet the festival court, celebrity guests, and other festival dignitaries during a relaxing luncheon on the country club grounds. Cape Fear Country Club, 1518 Country Club Road, Wilmington. Info: www.ncazaleafestival.org.

4/6 Jazz at the CAM

6:30–8 p.m. Vocalist Jua returns to the Cameron Art Museum's jazz music series to delight with his deep, rich, emotive tone evoking memories of Jon Lucien. Admission: $10–20. Cameron Art Museum, 3201 South Seventeenth St., Wilmington. Info: (910) 395-5999 or www.cameronartmuseum.org.

4/6 Painted Bunting

9:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. Come and hear all about our area's most colorful bird at this free program. Native bonus plant sale from 10 – 12:30 after the program! Wild Bird & Garden Southport, 105 E. Brown St., Southport. Info: (910) 457-9453 or www.wildbirdgardeninc.com

4/6–9 Live Theater

8 p.m. or 3 p.m. Sunday. Come see S. Randolph Mitchell's play *Theodora* based on the ancient tale of a former prostitute who became a empress of the Roman Empire. Red Barn Studio Theatre. Tickets $15 at (910)251-1788 or www.thalian.org

4/7–9 Cirque Ma'Ceo

4:30 p.m. & 7:30 p.m. The Azalea Festival brings us a theatrical equestrian show under the big top with acrobatics and aerialists woven in the rich gypsy tradition. Wilmington International Airport, 1740 Airport Blvd., Suite 12, Wilmington. Tickets: $18 children, $35–50 adult, $70 VIP, at www.maceocirco.com

4/7 Airlie Garden Party

12 p.m. Luncheon/garden party held at Airlie Gardens for sponsors and dignitaries of the NC Azalea Festival featuring a Citadel Summerall Guards performance and southern garden party attire. Airlie Gardens, 300 Airlie Road, Wilmington. Info: www.ncazaleafestival.org.

4/7 After Garden Get Down

2–5 p.m. Dockside party immediately following the NC Azalea Festival's Airlie Luncheon Garden Party. Guests will enjoy live music, food, drinks and the best view on the Intracoastal. Admission: Free. Bluewater Grill, 4 Marina St., Wrightsville Beach. Info: www.ncazaleafestival.org.

4/7 & 8 Music on Market

7:30 p.m. "A Living Last Supper" is a dramatic and powerful portrayal of Jesus and his disciples on the night before his betrayal. Seated in front of a backdrop of da Vinci's famous painting. Music from the Lenten portion of Handel's "Messiah" performed by the church Chorale. Admission: Free. St. Andrews-Covenant

CALENDAR

Presbyterian Church, 1416 Market St., Wilmington. Info: (910) 762-9693 or www.musiconmarket.org.

4/7–9 — Azalea Garden Tour
10 a.m. – 4 p.m. Self-guided tour of 12 local private and public gardens sponsored by the Cape Fear Garden Club. Ribbon cutting ceremony takes place at the Hugh Morton Amphitheater at 10 a.m. followed by a reception at the Dr. Heber W. Johnson Rotary Garden. Admission: $25. Various venues in Wilmington. Info: www.ncazaleafestival.org.

4/7–9 — Azalea Juried Art Show
10 a.m. – 5 p.m. Annual juried art show and sale presented by the Wilmington Art Association featuring work by more than one hundred local and national artists. Admission: Free. Hannah Block Community Arts Center, 120 South Second St., Wilmington. Info: www.ncazaleafestival.org.

4/7–9 — Azalea Festival St. Fair
5–10 p.m. (Friday); 10 a.m. – 10 p.m. (Saturday); 10 a.m. – 6 p.m. (Sunday). Family-friendly St. fair featuring more than 330 food and arts and crafts vendors as well as live entertainment on four stages. Admission: Free. Market St. & Water St., Wilmington. Info: (910) 794-4650 or www.ncazaleafestival.org.

4/8 — Walk to Defeat ALS
9 a.m. 5K family-friendly walk held on the UNCW campus to bring hope to people living with ALS. Proceeds benefit the ALS Association's care services and research. UNCW Greene Track & Field, Hamilton Drive, Wilmington. Info: (919) 390-0121 or web.alsa.org.

4/8 — Live Theatre
7:30 p.m. PNC Broadway presents *Pippin* live. The story follows the title character, a young prince searching for the meaning of life. Admission: $40–92. Wilson Center, 703 North Third St., Wilmington. Info: (910) 362-7999 or www.capefearstage.com

4/8 — Azalea Festival Parade
9 a.m. Festival procession through downtown Wilmington featuring floats, marching bands, clowns, horses, visiting celebrities and the Azalea Festival court. Admission: Free. Third St. & Market St., Wilmington. Info: (910) 794-4650 or www.ncazaleafestival.org.

4/8 — Patrons' Party Gala
Time TBD. Black-tie finale celebration held for sponsors of the NC Azalea Festival featuring food, dancing and live entertainment. Location TBD. Info: www.ncazaleafestival.org.

4/8 — K. Sridhar Live
7:30 p.m. Indian musician K. Sridhar is maestro of one of the world's most difficult instruments, the Sarod. He blends two musical traditions that coexist in the north and south of his country and became the youngest member of Ravi Shankar's orchestral group at age 12. Admission: $30. Beckwith Recital Hall, UNCW, 5270 Randall Drive, Wilmington. Info: (910) 962-3500 or uncw.edu/music.

4/8 & 9 — Azalea Historic Home Tour
1–6 p.m. (Saturday); 1–5 p.m. (Sunday). Self-guided tour of historic homes that showcase the wide variety of architectural styles found in Wilmington. Admission: $30–35. Proceeds benefit the Historic Wilmington Foundation. Various venues in Wilmington. Info: www.ncazaleafestival.org.

4/8 & 9 — Riverwalk Shag Contest
11 a.m. Shag contest held in conjunction with the NC Azalea Festival featuring DJ Fred Rouse, raffles, vendors, shag demonstrations, line dancing and more. Hilton Wilmington Riverside Ballroom, 301 North Water St., Wilmington. Info: www.ncazaleafestival.org.

4/8 & 9 — Airlie Coin Show
10 a.m. Family-friendly event featuring more than thirty dealers from surrounding states to appraise, buy, sell and trade coins, currency and other numismatic items. Don McNeely of Gold History Corporation will demonstrate gold panning. Admission: Free. Elks Lodge, 5102 Oleander Drive, Wilmington. Info: www.ncazaleafestival.org.

4/8 & 9 — Airlie Boxing Tournament
Tournament showcasing some of the finest boxers from the national and international level plus military branches. Includes six divi-

sions and a master division. Admission: Free. CFCC, 609 North Front St., Wilmington. Info: www.ncazaleafestival.org.

4/8–10 Spring Plant Sale
9 a.m. – 6 p.m. (Friday & Saturday); 12– 5 p.m. (Sunday). Plant sale featuring plants grown by members of the Hobby Greenhouse Club. Admission: Free. A portion of profits go to scholarships for local horticulture students. Forest Hills Hobby Greenhouse, 2318 Metts Avenue, Wilmington. Info: www.hobbygreenhouseclub.org.

4/9 Festival Finale
4–8 p.m. Bluewater Waterfront Grill kicks off their Waterfront Music Series by hosting the last event of the NC Azalea Festival. Party with festival committee VIP guests, enjoy live music and dine on the dock. Admission: Free. Bluewater Grill, 4 Marina St., Wrightsville Beach. Info: www.ncazaleafestival.org.

4/9 Listen Up Brunswick County
7:30 p.m. Features the Canadian folk singer James Keelaghan live in concert. His music bridges traditional folk music with roots revival and Celtic music, with a focus on social justice and historic events. Admission: $20. BCC Odell Williamson Auditorium, 50 College Road NW, Bolivia. Info: (860) 485-3354 or www.listenupbrunswickcounty.com.

4/10 & 11 Youth Nature Program
10–11 a.m. Children will discover nature through stories, songs, hands-on activities, hikes and crafts. The theme is "The Pollinator's Journey." Admission: $3. Halyburton Park, 4099 South Seventeenth St., Wilmington. Info: (910) 341-0075 or www.halyburtonpark.com.

4/11 Over 50s Social Dance
7:30 p.m. – 10 p.m. Get a quick lesson and enjoy ballroom, social and line dancing. Singles and couples welcome. Admission: $8. Info: Contact Tim Gugan (910) 620-8427 or overfiftiesdanceclub.org.

4/12 Home Free in Concert
8 p.m. The all vocal 5-man band country sensation Home Free is bringing Nashville country standards and country-dipped pop hits to town. Admission: $25–100. CFCC Wilson Center, 703 North Third St., Wilmington. Info: (910) 362-7999 or www.capefearstage.com

4/12 Airlie Gardens Bird Walk
8:00 a.m. – 9:30 a.m. Join Wild Bird & Garden staff and Airlie environmental educators for a relaxed bird walk around Airlie Gardens. Admission to Airlie Gardens: $5 New Hanover County Residents, $9 visitors. Info: (910) 343-6001 or www.wildbirdgardeninc.com

4/13 Spring Eggventure
9 a.m. – 12 p.m. Nature program for kids featuring animal eggs and nests, egglympics, story time, egg hunts, and a spring nature hike. Admission: $5. Halyburton Park, 4099 South Seventeenth St., Wilmington. Info: (910) 341-0075 or www.halyburtonpark.com.

4/13–30 Live Theatre
7:30 p.m. (Thursday–Saturday); 3 p.m. (Sunday). Dram Tree Shakespeare presents William Shakespeare's *The Comedy of Errors* at DREAMS. The production is directed by Philadelphia based guest director, KC MacMillan. DREAMS, 901 Fanning St., Wilmington. Info: (910) 726-3545 or www.dramtreeshakes.org.

4/14 Easter Egg Hunt Carnival
10 a.m. – 2 p.m. Kid-friendly Easter egg hunt/carnival featuring continuous games and egg hunts plus bounce house, petting zoo, pony rides, face painting and pictures with Buddy the Battleship Bunny. Admission: $5. Battleship NC, 1 Battleship Road, Wilmington. Info: (910) 251-5797 or www.battleshipnc.com.

4/14–16 Seaglass Salvage Market
9 a.m. – 3 p.m. (Friday); 9 a.m. – 5 p.m. (Saturday). Once a month indoor/outdoor market filled with up cycled, recycled and repurposed furniture and home décor items, salvage pieces perfect for DIY projects, yard and garden décor, jewelry and local honey. Admission: Free. 1987 Andrew Jackson Highway (Hwy 74/76), Leland. Info: www.seaglasssalvagemarket.com.

4/15 & 16 SUP Surf Pro-Am
8 a.m. Stand up paddleboard surfing competition presented by Wrightsville Beach Museum and Carolina Paddleboard Co. to support the museum and it's Waterman Hall of Fame. Wrightsville Beach. Info: (910) 617-8019 or www.wbsupsurfproam.com.

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4/17 History Lecture
7:30–9 p.m. Local historian Elaine Henson will present a program on the history of Kure Beach in commemoration of the town's 70th anniversary. Admission: Free. Federal Point History Center, 1121 A North Lake Park Boulevard, Carolina Beach. Info: (910) 458-0502 or www.federal-point-history.org.

4/18 Rush Hour Concert
5:30 p.m. The Rush Hour concert features bluesman Randy McQuay — recipient of the Lee Oskar Top Harmonica Player Award, winner of the International Blues Challenge in Memphis, and reigning Cape Fear Blues Challenge Solo Champion. Admission: $5–10. UNCW Kenan Auditorium, 515 Wagoner Drive, Wilmington. Info: (910) 962-3500 or uncw.edu/presents/rushhour.html.

4/19 Youth Program
3 – 3:45 p.m. Earth Day – Recycle and Plant some Grass! Hear the story of the little goat who ate all the things we recycle. Learn all the different ways you can reuse what we usually throw away. Plant some grass to take home and make a fun snack. Admission: Free. Wrightsville Beach, 303 West Salisbury St., Wrightsville Beach. Info: (910) 256-2569 or wbmuseumofhistory.com.

4/19–23 Carolina Cup
Times vary, check website for details. Weeklong event featuring over a dozen clinics, multiple races, an expo, banquet, live entertainment, raffle, awards and after party. Races include the 3.5-mile Harbor Island Recreational, 6.5-mile Money Island Open, 13-mile Graveyard Elite and a kids Charity Relay. Blockade Runner Beach Resort, 275 Waynick Blvd., Wrightsville Beach. Info: (910) 616-9675 or wrightsvillebeachpaddleclub.com/Carolina-cup.

4/19–5/7 Beauty to Bee-hold
8a.m. – 8 p.m. A traveling exhibit on the importance of bees in our gardens and natural areas will be on display at the NHC Arboretum. Walk the garden StoryWalk. Witness the unveiling of new outdoor sculpture by artist J.A. Cobb. Free Admission. NHC Arboretum, 6206 Oleander Drive, Wilmington. Info: www.nhcarboretum.org

4/20 Golf Talk
5:30 p.m. *Salt* magazine presents our editor, Jim Dodson, *New York Times* best-selling author, releasing his newest book *The Range Bucket List*, and Wells Fargo Championship Chairman Mac Everett to talk golf, the championship, and what's on their "range bucket lists." Featuring hors d'oeuvres and craft beer from Wrightsville Beach Brewery. Tickets: $20. Wrightsville Manor, 1952 Allens Lane, Wilmington. Info: 910-833-7158 or www.TeeingOffWithJim.brownpapertickets.com

4/20 NC Birding Trail Hike
8 a.m. – 2 p.m. Explore the Holly Shelter Gamelands along the NC Birding Trail in the coastal plain. Hike will be approximately 2 miles and transportation from Halyburton Park is included. Admission: $10. Halyburton Park, 4099 South Seventeenth St., Wilmington. Info: (910) 341-0075 or www.halyburtonpark.com.

4/20 & 21 Live Dance
7:30 p.m. The Trisha Brown Dance Company presents "In Plain Site". The show is a mobile site specific series of performances that will leave the stage and travel approximately two city blocks. Admission: $32. Wilson Center, 703 North Third St., Wilmington. Info: (910) 362-7999 or cfcc.edu/capefearstage.com.

4/20-23 Master Gardener's Plant Sale
9:00 a.m. –5:00 pm, Thursday–Saturday, and 12:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. on Sunday. The annual Master Gardener's Plant Sale at the NHC Arboretum offers a bevy of plants propagated by Master Gardener's. The dizzying selection includes 6,000 native plants. Info: http://www.arboretumplantsale.info/index.html

4/21 Star Party
7–10 p.m. Join Cape Fear Museum for an evening of stargazing and astronomy activities. Experience laser-guided constellation tours, planetarium shows, telescope viewings, and other exciting activities related to this year's theme: "Star Light, Star Bright." Admission: Free. Carolina Beach State Park, 1010 State Park Road, Carolina Beach. Info: www.capefearmuseum.com/programs/star-party.

4/21 Greenfield Lake Concert
7:30 p.m. Soulful R&B combo Nathaniel Rateliff & The Night Sweats perform live at Greenfield Lake. Admission: $27–32. Greenfield Lake Amphitheater, 1941 Amphitheater Drive, Wilmington. Info: greenfieldlakeamphitheater.com.

4/21 Guest Artist Series
7:30 p.m. The Guest Art Series at St. Paul's features the Atlantic Chamber Ensemble. With their unique combination of strings, winds, and piano, they have the ability to program a variety of different styles of music and can include works seldom heard for their use of less traditional instrumentation. Admission: $15. St. Paul's Episcopal Church, 16 North Sixteenth St., Wilmington. Info: (910) 762-4578 or www.spechurch.com.

4/21 & 22 Community Theatre & Auction
7:30 p.m. Thalian Association presents Divine Divas featuring 12 well-known actresses from the local theatre community and performers from TACT Youth Theatre performing songs from the American Musical Theatre Songbook. A silent auction will be offered at each performance. Admission: $30. Hannah Block Community Arts Center, Wilmington. Info: (910) 251-1788 or thalian.org.

4/22 Flytrap Frolic
9 a.m. – 1 p.m. Family-friendly event hosted by Coastal Land Trust, exploring the region's native carnivorous plants. Activities include presentations on carnivorous plants, live snakes and birds of prey, garden walking tours, plant scavenger hunt, displays, crafts, face painting and more. Admission: Free. Stanley Rehder Carnivorous Plant Garden, 3800 Canterbury Road, Wilmington. Info: (910) 790-4524 or www.coastallandtrust.org.

4/22 Metropolitan Opera
1 – 5 p.m. The Osher Lifelong Learning Institute presents *Eugene Onegin*. Anna Netrebko stars in one of her most acclaimed roles as

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Tatiana, the naïve heroine of Tchaikovsky's opera, adapted from Pushkin's classic novel. Admission: $20–24. Lumina Theater, UNCW, 601 South College Road, Wilmington. Info: (910) 962-3195 or www.uncw.edu.

4/22 — **Gardening Program**

2 p.m. Four Seasons of the Southern Garden. Master gardener Jon Wooten discusses garden bed preparation, plant selections, and cultural practices that work well in our coastal conditions. Admission: Free. Northeast Regional Library, 1241 Military Cutoff Road, Wilmington. Info: (910) 798-6371 or www.nhclibrary.org.

4/22 — **Symphony Orchestra Concert**

7:30 p.m. The Wilmington Symphony Orchestra performs its season finale featuring Justin Hoke on guitar and includes Leo Brouwer's "Conciorto Elegiaco" and Shostakovich's "Music from the Gadfly." Admission: $10–30. Wilson Center, 703 North Third St., Wilmington. Info: (910) 362-7999 or cfcc.edu/capefearstage.com.

4/22 — **Mike Farris Live**

7:30 p.m. Grammy Award-winning blues and gospel singer-songwriter and former lead vocalist for the Tennessee group Screamin Cheetah Wheelies, Mike Farris adds soul to his music by rearranging songs of centuries past or infusing new lyrical life to half-songs. Admission: $22–40. Thalian Hall, 310 Chestnut St., Wilmington. Info: (910) 632-2285 or www.thalianhall.org.

4/22 & 23 — **Parade of Homes**

12–5 p.m. Annual home tour hosted by the Wilmington-Cape Fear Home Builders Association showcasing the craftsmanship, diversity and quality of 50 of the region's premier homes as well as the latest trends, materials and products in home building. Also runs 4/29 & 30. Admission: Free. Various homes in Wilmington. Info: (910) 799-2611 or wilmingtonparadeofhomes.com.

4/23 — **Race for the Planet**

8 a.m. 5K in celebration of Earth Day on a flat, mostly asphalt course, which offers excellent views of the ocean, maritime forest and historic Fort Fisher Civil War site. Free admission to the aquarium included. NC Aquarium at Fort Fisher, 900 Loggerhead Road, Kure Beach. Info: (910) 772-0500 or www.ncquariums.com/fort-fisher-5k-race-for-the-planet.

4/23 — **Paws4People**

3 p.m. Pet-friendly 5K and 1-mile fun run through Empie Park toward Burnt Mill Creek Reservoir with prizes awarded to top runners and dogs. Admission: $20–30. Proceeds benefit Paws4People animal assistance programs. Empie Park, 3405 Park Avenue, Wilmington. Info: its-go-time.com/p4p5k.

4/23 — **Seafood, Blues & Jazz Festival**

11 a.m. Rescheduled from October due to Hurricane Matthew. Annual festival featuring live jazz and blues performances on two stages, food and craft vendors, wine garden, kids zone and special headliners Johnny Lang and Samantha Fish. Admission: $25–60. Fort Fisher Military Recreation Area, 118 Riverfront Road, Kure Beach. Info: (910) 458-8434 or www.pleasureislandnc.org.

4/23 — **Chamber Music Concert**

3 p.m. Chamber Music Wilmington presents the acclaimed string ensemble Jasper String Quartet live in concert. The program features Schubert's String Quartet No. 14 ("Death and the Maiden"), "A Kernis's Meditation" from Quartet No. 1 (Musica Celestis), and Mozart's D Major Quartet K. 575. Admission: $30. UNCW Beckwith Recital Hall, 5270 Randall Drive, Wilmington. Info: (910) 343-1079 or www.chambermusicwilmington.org.

4/23 — **Touch-A-Truck**

Children can see and touch heavy machinery and meet the people who build, protect and serve the community. Event features more than 50 vehicles, helicopter landings, bounce houses and live music. Info: www.jlwnc.org/touch-a-truck.

4/23 – 5/9 — **Jewish Film Festival**

7 p.m. Annual film festival featuring award-winning feature films and selected shorts offering unique perspectives on Jewish identity, customs, rituals, history and contemporary global politics. Film selections include the dramatic feature *Denial* (April 23) starring Rachel Weisz about the true story of a legal battle between a professor and a Holocaust denier, documentaries *Flory's Flame* and *A Heartbeat Away* (April 24), and the dramatic feature *24 Days* which recreates the harrowing 24 day kidnapping of a young Jewish man. Admission: $10 – $17. Thalian Hall, 310 Chestnut St., Wilmington. Info: www.wilmingtonjff.org. Tickets: www.thalian.org or (910) 632-2285

4/24 & 25 — **Youth Nature Program**

10–11 a.m. Children will discover nature through stories, songs, hands-on activities, hikes and crafts. This week's theme is "blue birds." Admission: $3. Halyburton Park, 4099 South Seventeenth St., Wilmington. Info: (910) 341-0075 or www.halyburtonpark.com.

4/27 — **Bluegrass Bash**

7:30 p.m. Thalian Hall presents the best in local bluegrass live featuring Massive Grass and Folkstone String Band. Admission: $15–20. Thalian Hall, 310 Chestnut St., Wilmington. Info: (910) 632-2285 or www.thalianhall.org.

4/28 — **Fourth Friday**

6–9 p.m. Downtown galleries, studios and art spaces open their doors to the public in an after-hours celebration of art and culture. Admission: Free. Various venues in Wilmington. Info: (910) 343-0998 or www.artscouncilofwilmington.org.

4/28 & 29 — **70th Anniversary Celebration**

7–10 p.m. (Friday); 11 a.m. – 5 p.m. (Saturday). Kure Beach's 70th anniversary celebration featuring live music by the Imitations on Friday and a St. festival on Saturday. Ocean Front Park, 105 Atlantic Avenue, Kure Beach. Info: (910) 458-8216 or www.townofkurebeach.org.

4/28 & 29 — **Relay for Life**
6 p.m. – 10 a.m. Overnight community fundraising walk in which teams camp out and take turns walking around the track. Proceeds benefit the American Cancer Society. Ashley High School, 555 Halyburton Memorial Parkway, Wilmington. Info: (910) 833-4536 or www.relayforlife.org.

4/28–30 — **Yoga Retreat**
3 p.m. (Friday) – 12 p.m. (Sunday). Three-day yoga retreat consisting of daily meditation and gentle and vinyasa flow yoga classes open to all levels. Ample free time to explore, rest, and hike. Meals provided. Admission: $375–575. Wilmington Yoga Center, 5329 Oleander Drive, Suite 200, Wilmington. Info: (910) 350-0234 or wilmingtonyogacenter.com.

4/28–30 — **Trauma Yoga Teacher Training**
6–9 p.m. (Friday); 12–7 p.m. (Saturday); 9 a.m. – 4 p.m. (Sunday). Workshop on why and how to modify yoga to make it trauma-sensitive. Particular focus on Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. Admission: $375. Wilmington Yoga Center, 5329 Oleander Drive, Suite 200, Wilmington. Info: (910) 350-0234 or wilmingtonyogacenter.com.

4/28 – 5/7 — **Youth Theatre**
7:30 p.m. (Monday – Saturday); 3 p.m. (Sunday). Thalian Association Youth Theatre presents *A Chorus Line*, the ambitions of professional Broadway gypsies to land a job in a show. Admission: $12.75. Hannah Block Community Arts Center, 120 South Second St., Wilmington. Info: (910) 251-1788 or thaliana.org.

4/29 — **Walk for Autism**
7 a.m. Family-friendly 5K and kids' dash open to all ages and disabilities in support of Autism. Features music and kids' play area. Proceeds benefit the Autism Society of North Carolina. Mayfaire Town Center, 6835 Conservation Way, Wilmington. Info: support.autismsociety-nc.org.

4/29 — **Work on Wilmington**
8 a.m. – 12 p.m. (work); 12–3:30 p.m. (party). Hundreds of volunteers connect with non-profit organizations across the region to beautify, build and better the community. After party celebration held aboard the USS NC Battleship. Various locations in Wilmington. Info: (910) 762-2611 or www.workonwilmington.org.

4/29 — **Great Strides 5K**
9 a.m. National family-oriented 5K/fundraiser for the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation featuring children's activities, food and festivities. Hugh MacRae Park, 314 Pine Grove Drive, Wilmington. Info: fightcf.cff.org.

4/29 — **Kure Beach St. Festival**
11 a.m. – 5 p.m. Annual St. festival at Kure Beach featuring arts and crafts vendors, food, live music and children's entertainment. Oceanfront Park, 105 Atlantic Avenue, Kure Beach. Info: www.townofkurebeach.org/annual-St.-festival.aspx.

4/29 — **Landfall Gala**
6 p.m. Celebration/fundraiser for the Landfall Foundation featuring food, drinks, live auction, live music and dancing. Proceeds benefit the Landfall Foundation. Country Club of Landfall, 800 Sunrunner Place, Wilmington. Info: landfallfoundation.org/gala..

4/29 — **Making Legends Local Gala**
6:30-8 p.m. (Reception); 8–10:30 p.m. (Show). Fun-filled evening with British-themed lip-syncing variety show. British Invasion Reception held prior. Admission: $100/reception & show; $35/show only. Proceeds benefit the Carousel Center. Audi Cape Fear, 255 Old Eastwood Road, Wilmington. Info: (910) 254-9898 or carouselcenter.org/gala-2017.

4/29 — **DASH Ensemble**
7:30 p.m. Thalian Hall and the UNCW Office of the Arts presents DASH Ensemble, a troupe that combines elements of modern dance, hip-hop, floor work and physical theater to create movement language that expresses ideas about growth, love, loss, war, and determination. Admission: $18–32. Thalian Hall, 310 Chestnut St., Wilmington. Info: (910) 632-2285 or www.thalianhall.org.

4/30 — **Symphony Youth Orchestra**
4 p.m. The Wilmington Symphony Youth Orchestra and Junior Strings, directed by Steven Errante, perform a free family concert. Admission: Free. UNCW Kenan Auditorium, 515 Wagoner Drive, Wilmington. Info: (910) 962-3500 or www.wilmingtonsymphony.org/youth-orchestra.

WEEKLY HAPPENINGS

Monday – Wednesday — **Cinematique Films**
7 p.m. Independent, classic and foreign films screened in historic Thalian Hall. Check online for updated listings and special screenings. Admission: $7. Thalian Hall, 310 Chestnut St., Wilmington. Info/Tickets: (910) 632-2285 or www.thalianhall.org.

Tuesday — **Wine Tasting**
6–8 p.m. Free wine tasting hosted by a wine professional plus wine and small plate specials all night. Admission: Free. The Fortunate Glass, 29 South Front St., Wilmington. Info: (910) 399-4292 or www.fortunateglasswinebar.com.

Tuesday — **Cape Fear Blues Jam**
8 p.m. A unique gathering of the area's finest blues musicians. Bring your instrument and join the fun. No cover charge. The Rusty Nail, 1310 South Fifth Avenue. Info: (910) 251-1888 or www.capefearblues.org.

Wednesday — **Ogden Farmers Market**
8 a.m. – 1 p.m. Local farmers, producers and artisans sell fresh fruits, veggies, plants, eggs, cheese, meat, honey, baked goods, wine, bath products and more. Opens April 13. Ogden Park, 615 Ogden Park Drive, Wilmington. Info: (910) 538-6223 or www.wilmingtonandbeaches.com/events-calendar/ogden-farmers-market.

Wednesday — **Poplar Grove Farmers Market**
8 a.m. – 1 p.m. (Wednesday); 3–7 p.m. (Thursday). Open-air market held on the front lawn of historic Poplar Grove Plantation offering fresh produce, plants, herbs, baked goods and handmade artisan crafts. Opens April 19. Poplar Grove Plantation, 10200 Us Highway 17 North, Wilmington. Info: (910) 395-5999 or www.poplargrove.org/farmers-market.

Wednesday — **T'ai Chi at CAM**
12:30–1:30 p.m. Qigong (Practicing the Breath of Life) with Martha Gregory. Open to beginner and experienced participants. Admission: $5–8. Cameron Art Museum, 3201 South Seventeenth St., Wilmington. Info: (910) 395-5999 or www.cameronartmuseum.org.

Wednesday — **Wednesday Echo**
7:30–11:30 p.m. Weekly singer/songwriter open mic night that welcomes all genres of music. Each person will have 3–6 songs. Palm Room, 11 East Salisbury St., Wrightsville Beach. Info: (910) 509-3040.

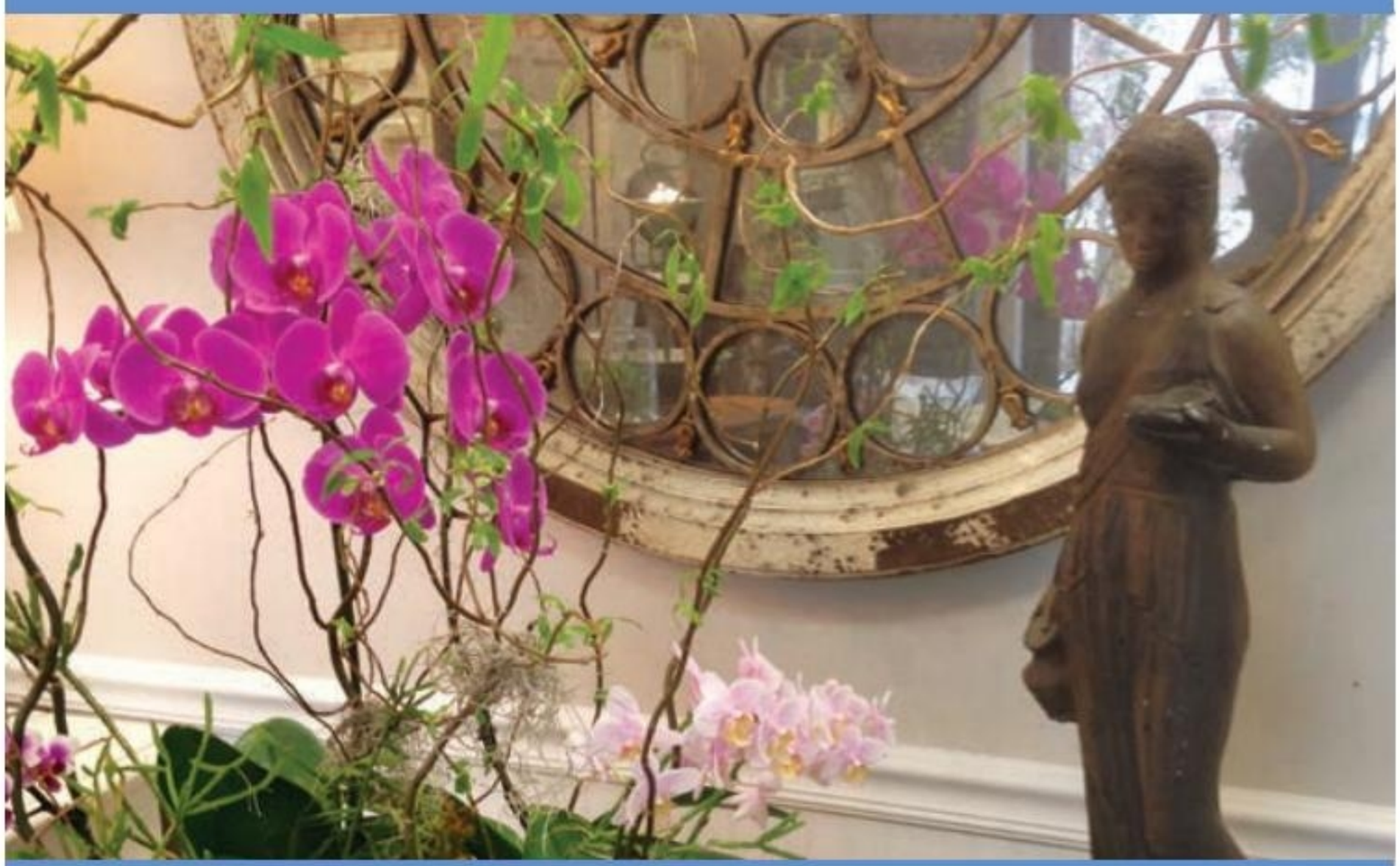
Thursday — **Yoga at the CAM**
12–1 p.m. Join in a soothing retreat sure to charge you up while you relax in a beautiful setting. Sessions are ongoing and are open to beginner and experienced participants. Admission: $5–8. Cameron Art Museum, 3201 South Seventeenth St., Wilmington. Info: (910) 395-5999 or www.cameronartmuseum.org.

Friday & Saturday — **Dinner Theatre**
7 p.m. TheatreNOW presents Clyde Edgerton's *Killer Diller* adapted for stage by Paul Ferguson. Runs March 31–April 29. TheatreNOW, 19 South Tenth St., Wilmington. Info: (910) 399-3now or www.theatrewilmington.com.

Saturday — **Riverfront Farmers Market**
8 a.m. – 1 p.m. Curbside market featuring local farmers, producers, artisans, crafters and live music along the banks of the Cape Fear River. Opens April 16. Riverfront Park, North Water St., Wilmington. Info: (910) 538-6223 or www.wilmingtondowntown.com/events/farmers-market.

To add a calendar event, please contact calendar@saltmagazinenc.com. Events must be submitted by the first of the month, one month prior to the event.

UPTOWN MARKET



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Port City People

Wilmington Wine & Chocolate Festival

Fundraiser for the Volunteer Older Citizens Action League

Friday, February 3, 2017

Photographs by Bill Ritenour

Lora & Steve Little

Maxie & Sandra Washington

Steve & Kristyn Piatkowski

Brandon & Crystal Jones

Taylor Upchurch, Clay Gruber

Kristina Spurlock, Jeremy Weaver

Daniel Seamans

Madison Long, Elizabeth Garcia, Allison Kramlick

Lyndsay Lowdermilk, Noah Richardson

Brandon Trent, Katie Henderson

Jimmy Jeffries, Brittany Cottle

Joe Otmar, Sarah Long

Port City People

2017 Cape Fear Heart Ball

Wilmington Convention Center

Saturday, February 18, 2017

Photographs by Bill Ritenour

Chris & Dale Lacey, Gene & Alison Long, Carole & Terry Sheffield

Legare Simpson, Matthew Adams

Christina Rivenbark, Bob Odom

Teresa Jarrett, Sadie Chapman

Sybil Stokes, Susan Perry

Mary Triplett, Anne McPherson, Phyllis Shanklin

Rebecca, Elbert, Rose, Carrie & Kevin Helton

Pierce Barden, Kiki Lackman

Damin & Sue Brezinski

Chasity Chace, Aaron & Jessica Guyton

Marisa & Pat Gallaher

Holly & Captain Matthew Grange

Port City People

7th Annual Red Dress Gala

Sponsored by the Eta Xi chapter of Alpha Phi at UNCW

Saturday, February 25, 2017

Photographs by Bill Ritenour

Holly Jacobs, Samantha Widman, Laura Beasley

Abby Webster, Cameron Cook, Amy White

Victoria Radchenko, Ana Mitchell, Alexis Sales

Mike & Victoria Vaillancourt, Kennedy & Frank Brown

Allyson, Clarke, & Jerry Smith

Trisha Santos, Bailey Miller, Ashley DeNardo

Joey Stich, Dana Lemoine

Hannah Gantz, Carson Elmore, Sydney Bouchelle

Wyatt Janning, Gracyn Dreyfus

Kara & Jacob Scott

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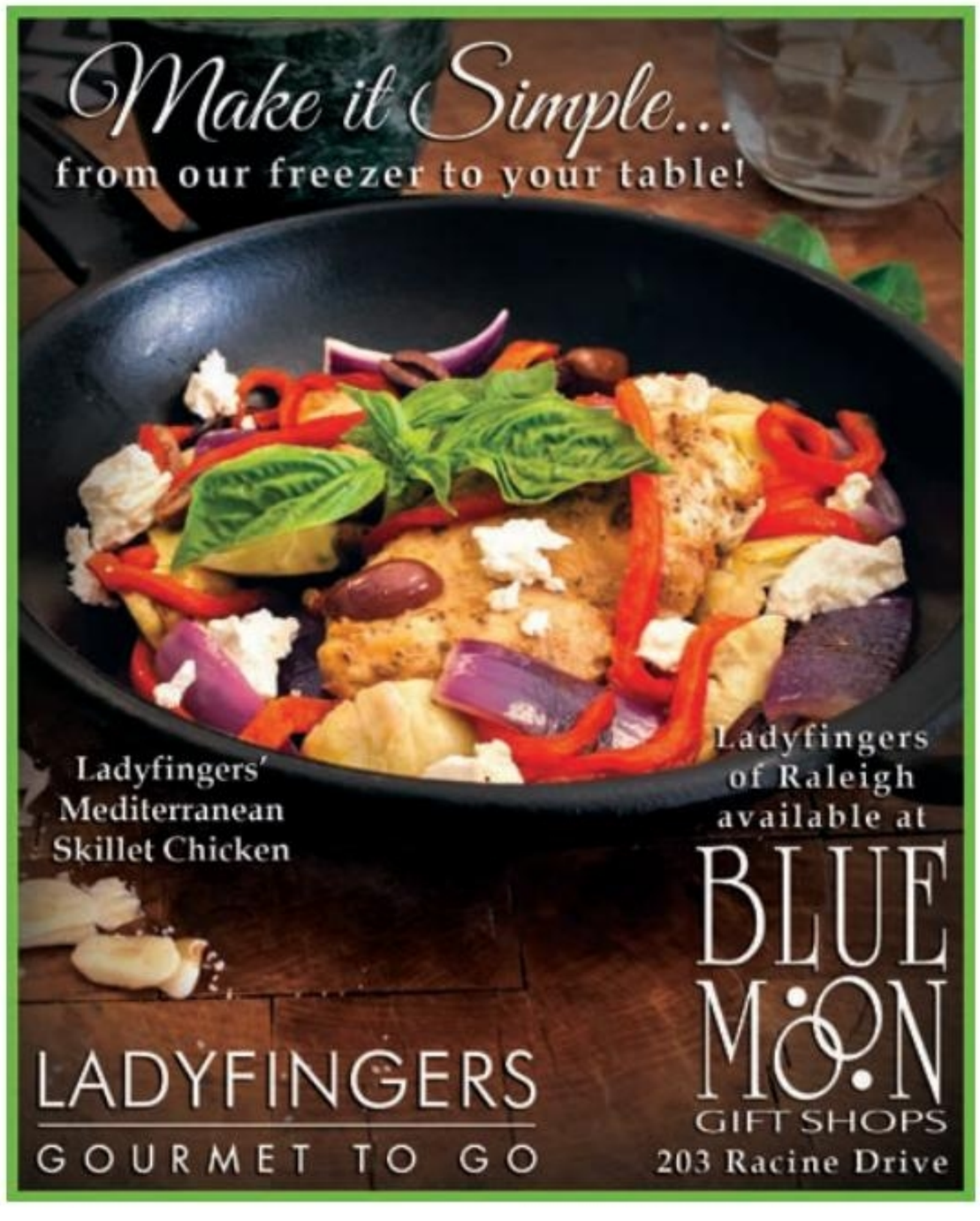
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Lunatics, Lovers and Poets

There's never a dull moment in Aries-land

By Astrid Stellanova

Oh, the famously maddening, cuh-razy-making Ram! Famous Arians include maniacs like Hitler (OK, OK, der Fürher was actually born on the cusp of Aries, with his sun in Taurus). But it also is the sign of beloved actors (Marlon Brando), singers (Lady Gaga) and rap stars (MC Hammer). Poets (Robert Frost, Maya Angelou) and artists (Leonardo da Vinci, Vincent Van Gogh), too, share the sign of the Ram. We may curse you, Aries Star Children, but we will also follow you, to cliff or cliff-hanger. *Ad Astra – Astrid*

Aries (March 21–April 19)
Sugar, you have it all: impetuousness, impatience. Usually, you are found stirring the pot in a very hot kitchen. Making action is your M.O., which is why your sign is common among generals and CEOs. But *you* ain't common. Driven, affectionate, passionately loyal — also easily ticked off. You push, you pull, you press, you tug; you don't relent. You have the combustible energy of a turbo jet. But what you need most right now is a sugar-free cake and a long nap.

Taurus (April 20–May 20)
How's the view from the edge? If you keep raising the hackles of a foe, you could wind up wearing your tonsils as jewelry. Honey, I hope you wake up to the fact that you cannot keep pushing the buttons of some of your most important allies without losing them for good.

Gemini (May 21–June 20)
I may not know karate but Astrid does know meltdowns. Juggling flaming batons has become your new normal. Sugar Pants, this is not a pace anybody could or should maintain. Even when you stop, you jog in place. Don't just do something — sit there till those hot pants cool off.

Cancer (June 21–July 22)
Drunker than Cooter Brown. Dishier than Smoky Bacon. This is a time of extremes for you. You have played your magnetism to the hilt, going all Zelda at the drop of a bra or jock strap. Honey, are you sure this is the plan — or is the plan in control of you?

Leo (July 23–August 22)
It's been a donkey's age since you told the most important person in your life you loved them more than a pack of Nabs and a Coke. They need to hear it. Sugar, don't play it cool. Let them know they are your MVP and cement the deal.

Virgo (August 23–September 22)
Something in the background of your life just ain't reading quite right. And, I'd wager my bunions and white hairs that you have been kept out of a situation that deeply concerns you. It may be for your own protection, but I would prick up my ears and listen. If ole Astrid's wrong, you can keep the bunions.

Libra (September 23–October 22)
Well, you can't uncook a cooked goose, can you? And you can't make amends if you don't even recognize you had a hand in turning the oven temp up waaaay too high. You didn't intend to create the situation, but if you own up, you can set things sorta, kinda right-again. It is never too late.

Scorpio (October 23–November 21)
Let's say you have been obsessed with settling a score. Am I right? Bet you a doughnut for a dollar that you ain't gotten over an old feud. It's been simmering for some months now. Let's say you might want to lie low, because this particular feud won't be helped by throwing more fat on the fire.

Sagittarius (November 22–December 21)
The lump in your mattress is not from stashed cash. Let's say you've been a little extravagant, and you really and truly need some shekels that are scarce as hen's teeth. Baby, austerity is the word for the month. But when you emerge from this dry spell, an old debt will be repaid and in the nick of time.

Capricorn (December 22–January 19)
Don't give a hoot and a holler for what some stranger thinks of your idea? It really deserves a better opinion and another look. You are on the right track — no matter what you've been told. Your inspiration isn't just all sweat — it's a little bit of genius, Honey.

Aquarius (January 20–February 18)
Laying it on with a trowel, were they? Turned your head, huh? Well, that's what people do when they sense an easy opportunity and a body in desperate need of an attagirl or an attaboy. Here's the thing: Your reputation is solid as a Cadillac. Keep your feet on the ground. You don't need that noise.

Pisces (February 19–March 20)
Even if Sheriff Andy Griffith got pulled into your latest kerfuffle, he wouldn't know what to do either. The situation you are in requires you to be your own good counsel. Go to the diner, get a good cup of coffee and a slice of pie, and think it through. You already know the truth, Sweet Thing.

For years, Astrid Stellanova owned and operated Curl Up and Dye Beauty Salon in the boondocks of North Carolina until arthritic fingers and her popular astrological readings provoked a new career path.

Brother, Can You Spare a Dime?

A gentle plea for local support

By Clyde Edgerton

A few years ago, the first board chair of the young Arts Council of Wilmington and New Hanover County was called away after a short time at the helm. I took his position with no previous board experience, and I have just recently finished a three-year tenure. Being a board chair was sometimes challenging, always interesting.

I made new friends on the board and met many artists and arts organizers around town. I also learned there are many generous folks in Wilmington, but also that the number of large donations to the Arts Council is few. I attribute this, in part, to the fact that the council is a recent start up — and also, to a certain extent, to my failure as board chair to take to the ropes of fundraising. I didn't find it easy to ask people for money, and I've learned that there are right ways, wrong ways, complicated ways, and simple ways to do that.

One way is to write a "Papadaddy" column and then pray.

I do believe donations are sure to increase over time as people become more and more exposed to what the Arts Council does for southeast North Carolina and her citizens. I've watched Opera Wilmington and other arts groups flourish with Arts Council help. I've read applications for grants from young artists who need and then get a hand through the Arts Council. I've seen sculpture pop up on empty street-sides throughout town and — thanks to the Arts Council — Fourth Friday Gallery nights are thriving as never before. And I believe more and more people, besides donating, will volunteer to help out as the word gets out.

One paradox on the financial end of things is that if the Arts Council is doing its job right, not placing itself in the spotlight, but serving as the hub, it can become invisible. Citizens are less likely to see it, to know what it does for our community.

Our community (and country) desperately needs artists, arts organizations and Arts Councils in supportive roles, of course. I hope the reasons become more and more obvious as the Arts Council's work becomes better known.

1) The arts bring us together to celebrate with fun, insight and fresh observations.

2) The arts make Wilmington an arts destination, thus improving the economy, as well as benefiting the cultural tone and norms of our region.

3) The arts teach empathy.

I recently read about number 3 — the arts and empathy — in an op-ed by the outgoing chairman of the Arts Council England, Peter Bazalgette. His fascinating book, *The Empathy Instinct*, mentions the really interesting "mirror neurons" phenomena that occurs when we look at art, allowing us to actually feel or "mirror" what the characters in the painting/play/novel/film feel. Because of my belief in number 1, I decided to head the Arts Council. Visionary Executive Director of the Arts Council of Wilmington and New Hanover County Rhonda Bellamy helped me understand the importance of number 2. But reading about the arts and empathy made me think about why so many artists love their work, enjoy the fine task of making art that pops — in performance, exhibits, stories, poems, installments, sculpture, gigs and more.

Art can help us grow, even after we are grown. Recently, the Arts Council supported the Invisible Wounds of War project during which veterans across the state wrote about the unseen wounds of war. The project helped me better understand my own wartime experiences.

Through art we can almost experience the inner turmoil of an addict, the vacant despair of people who are alone, the soul-numbing burns of poverty, the vacant-mindedness of those who disagree with us politically (just kidding — wanted to see if you are still with me. I'm very serious about the empathy. Don't leave me now).

Art, through empathy, may help us become more patient, less cocky, more careful about judgments, more appreciative of other souls. We see better.

If you are looking for a place to make a difference in the tone and sparkle of your community, in the life of artists and arts organizers, in our region's economy, if you hope to spread the possibility of empathy, please donate to your local Arts Council.

There's my ask. And now I'll go pray.

The Arts Council of Wilmington and New Hanover County, artscouncilofwilmington.org.

Clyde Edgerton is the author of 10 novels, a memoir and most recently, Papadaddy's Book for New Fathers. *He is the Thomas S. Kenan III Distinguished Professor of Creative Writing at UNCW.*

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